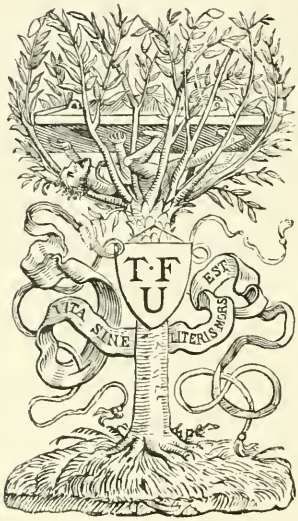
JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE


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JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

After the picture by himself

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE AND HIS ART. A MEMOIR, BY ANDRÉ THEURIET

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE AS ARTIST, BY GEORGE CLAUSEN, A.R.W.S.; MODERN REALISM IN PAINTING, BY WALTER SICKERT, N.E.A.C.; AND, A STUDY OF MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF, BY MATHILDE BLIND

ILLUSTRATED WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF BASTIEN-LEPAGE'S AND MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF'S WORKS

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JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE AND HIS ART.

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

AS MAN AND ARTIST.

IN the month of June, 1856, the chances of a Civil Service noviciate compelled me to live for six weeks at Damvillers, a small town on the Meuse, half-way between Verdun and Montmédy.

Damvillers was formerly fortified, and had the honour of being besieged by Charles V., but there is now nothing left to recall the memory of those warlike days. The whole aspect of the place is peaceful and rural. The people are occupied with agriculture. Orchards now cover the ground where the fortifications once stood, and form a circle of verdure round the scattered houses, in a valley where the Tinte winds through osier beds and meadows. On the right a vine-covered mound like the back of a camel, on the left a succession of wooded slopes, enclose the little town. The grey, blue hills are low. The monotony of the fields and meadows is broken only by rows of poplars. The ill-kept solitary streets

bordered by the labourers' houses with grey or dingy yellow fronts, have the same washed-out look as the landscape.

For a young fellow of twenty-two there was nothing here particularly attractive. I spent my solitary evenings with my elbows on my window-sill watching the twilight descend upon the brown-tiled roofs which enclose the great square as with a horizontal frame. In one corner the large green waggon of a travelling pedler was resting by the side of rows of earthenware, whose polished surface reflected the lights from the window of the neighbouring inn.

My only amusement consisted in listening to the chatter of some girls sitting at the tinner's door, or the shouts of the children playing at ball by the wall of the corn-market.

I little thought then that among these urchins, with torn pinafores and tangled hair, was to be found a future master of contemporary painting, and that the name of Bastien-Lepage thrown to and fro each evening by the children's voices, and repeated by the echoes of the solitary square, would come to be known, and received with acclamations throughout the world, by all who are interested in Art and in Artists.

I.

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE was born at Damvillers, on November 1, 1848, in a house which forms one of the corners of that square of which I have just spoken; a simple, well-to-do farmer's house, the front coloured yellow, the shutters grey.

On opening the outer door one finds oneself at once in the kitchen, the regular kitchen of the Meuse villages, with its high chimney-piece surmounted by cooking utensils, with its rows of copper saucepans, its *maie* for the bread, and its dresser furnished with coloured earthenware. The next room serves at once as sitting-room and dining-room, and even, at need, as bed-chamber. Above are some apartments not in general use, and then some vast granaries with sloping rafters.

It was in a room on the ground floor, with windows looking to the south, that the painter of Les Foins (*Hay*) and of Jeanne d'Arc first saw the light. The

family consisted of the father, a sensible, industrious, methodical man; of the mother, a woman of the truest heart and untiring devotion; and of the Grandfather Lepage, formerly a collector of taxes, who now found a home with his children. They lived in common on the modest produce of the fields, which the Bastiens themselves cultivated, and on the grandfather's small pension.

At five years old Jules began to show an aptitude for drawing, and his father was eager to cultivate this dawning talent. He himself had a taste for the imitative arts, employing his leisure in light work that required a certain manual skill, and to this he brought the scrupulous exactness and conscientious attention which were his ruling qualities.

From this time, in the winter evenings, he required that Jules should draw with pencil on paper the various articles in use upon the table—the lamp, the jug, the inkstand, etc. It was to this first education of the eye and of the hand that Bastien-Lepage owed that love of sincerity, that patient seeking for exactness of detail, which were the ruling motives of his life as an artist.

In thus urging him to draw every day, the father had no idea of making his son a painter. At that

time, especially at Damvillers, painting was not looked upon as a serious profession. The dream that he cherished, along with the grandfather, was to put Jules in a position to choose later on one of the administrative careers, such as overseer of forests, or bridges, or high-ways, which are always easiest of access to those who have been well trained in drawing. So, as soon as he should be eleven years old, he was to leave the communal school, and go to the College.

This involved great sacrifice, for the resources of the family were low, and in the interval a second boy was born ; but they redoubled their economy, and in 1859 they managed to send Jules to the College of Verdun.

It was at the drawing class that he worked with the greatest zeal. The correctness of his eye and the dexterity of his hand astonished his master.

When the boy went back to Damvillers for the holidays he drew everywhere ; upon his books, upon the walls, upon the doors, and long afterwards traces of these rough outlines might be seen on the orchard palings. His mother carefully preserved books full of pencil sketches of the little brother Emile in all sorts of poses.

His habit was to express any thought that possessed him by a drawing. He already attempted to reproduce with his pencil, passages that struck him in reading, and his first composition was Abraham's Sacrifice. Classical stories made more impression on his mind at this time than the rustic scenes which met him everywhere in his wanderings in the open air.

At this age, the surroundings in which we live, and which custom renders familiar to us, excite neither our surprise nor our imagination, but they enter our eyes and our memory, and, without our knowing it, become deeply engraven there. It is only in later years that, by comparison and reflection, we feel their powerful charm and their original grace.

In his walks across the fields, Bastien-Lepage received impressions of country life, and assimilated them like daily food. Gatherers of faggots carrying their bundles of wood; fishers for frogs wet to the knees, crossing the meadows with their fishing tackle on their shoulders; washerwomen wringing out their linen by the banks of the Tinte; loungers sitting under a willow tree, while the lunch of cheese is carried to the workers; the village gardens in April at the time of the spring digging, when the leafless

trees spread their shadows over borders adorned only by the precocious blossoms of the primrose and the crown imperial; potato fields, where fires of dried stems send up their blue smoke into the red October evening—all these details of village life entered the eyes of the child, who instinctively stored them up in his memory.

Literary studies had little interest for him, while on the contrary he had a strong liking for mathematics.

At one time when he was leaving the fourth form he thought of preparing for the examination for St. Cyr. This is not surprising in a department essentially military, whose remarkable men have all been generals or marshals; but this fancy, in which he was led more by imitation of others than by his own true calling, soon passed away, and during his last years at college his thoughts were constantly turned towards drawing, and when his course of philosophy came to an end, he made known to his parents his wish to go to Paris to study painting.

Great was the astonishment in the home at Damvillers. While recognizing his son's skill as a draughtsman, Father Bastien persisted in declaring that painting was not a career—nothing certain, a

long and costly apprenticeship, and then ten chances of failure to one of success. Let us talk rather of an honourable appointment in the administration of the state, where one is sure to get one's pay every month, with a prospect of a provision for one's old age!

They held a family council. The grandfather considered the adventure hazardous and shook his head; the mother was frightened above all at the dangers of Paris and the life of privation to be undergone there, but, conquered at last by the persistency of her son, she murmured timidly, "Yet, if Jules wishes it! . . ."

A way was found for settling everything. A friend of the family, who held a superior employment in the Central Postal Administration, advised Jules to go up for examination for admission into that department, promising him that on his being received, he would have him called to Paris, when it could be arranged for him to study at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in the hours that were free from his postal service. They took this advice; Bastien passed the examination, was named supernumerary, and set out for Paris about the end of 1867.

He divided his time between his postal duties and

his studies in the School. This could only be done under great disadvantages. The requirements of his position in the Post Office made consecutive and serious study very difficult.

By the end of six months he was brought to the conclusion that this double work was impossible; that he must choose between the Office and the School. He did not hesitate; he gave up the Post Office, and, furnished with a letter from M. Bouguereau, he entered the Cabanel studio after having been received in the School with the number one.

"All beginnings are painful," says Goethe. Bastien-Lepage had a harsh experience of this. He had burnt his ships in leaving the Post Office, and he found himself alone in Paris with very limited means of existence.

At Damvillers there was more self-denial. The mother, always valiant, herself went to work in the fields, that she might have something to add to the little sum sent every month to the young painter. The Council General of the Meuse had voted him an allowance of, I believe, six hundred francs; all this together scarcely furnished him with bed and board.

But Jules was endowed with a robust faith, a

firm will, a never-failing cheerfulness, and the magical power of these three enabled him to endure bravely the many trials of the years of his apprenticeship.

In 1870 he sent his first picture to the Salon. It passed unnoticed. I have just seen this picture again. It is the portrait of a man, quite young, dressed in a coat of strong green, the whole flooded with a greenish light. It is rather in the manner of Ricard, but the solid construction of the head and the expression of the face already indicate a painter who sees clearly and seeks to enter into the character of his model.

A short time later the war broke out. Jules Bastien enlisted in a company of volunteers, commanded by the painter Castellani, and did his duty bravely at the outposts.

One day in the trenches a shell burst near him and sent a clod of hardened earth straight at his chest. He was taken to the ambulance, where he remained during the last month of the siege, while another shell fell upon his studio, and there destroyed his first composition, a nymph, nude, her arms clasped over her blonde head, and bathing her feet in the waters of a spring.

On the re-opening of communications he hastened

back to his village, where he arrived, like the pigeon in the fable, disabled,

"Trainant l'aile et tirant le pied."

There he spent the remainder of the year 1871, recovering his shattered health in his native air, making long excursions as far as to the Moselle, and painting various portraits of relations and friends. He did not return to Paris until sometime in the year 1872.

Then the struggling life of the *débutant* began again. In order to make both ends meet he tried to get some of his drawings into the illustrated journals; but his manner of illustrating was not what was wanted by the editors, who sought above all things to please the ordinary public.

Weary of the struggle he began to paint fans.

One day a manufacturer of antéphelic milk (*lait antéphelique*) asked him to make a sort of allegorical picture intended for an advertisement for his Elixir of Youth. The artist, making a virtue of necessity, painted a bright gay picture, after the manner of Watteau's landscapes, with groups of young women dressed in modern style approaching a fountain, where Cupids were gambolling.

The painting finished, Bastien explained to the manufacturer his intention to exhibit it first of all in the Salon.

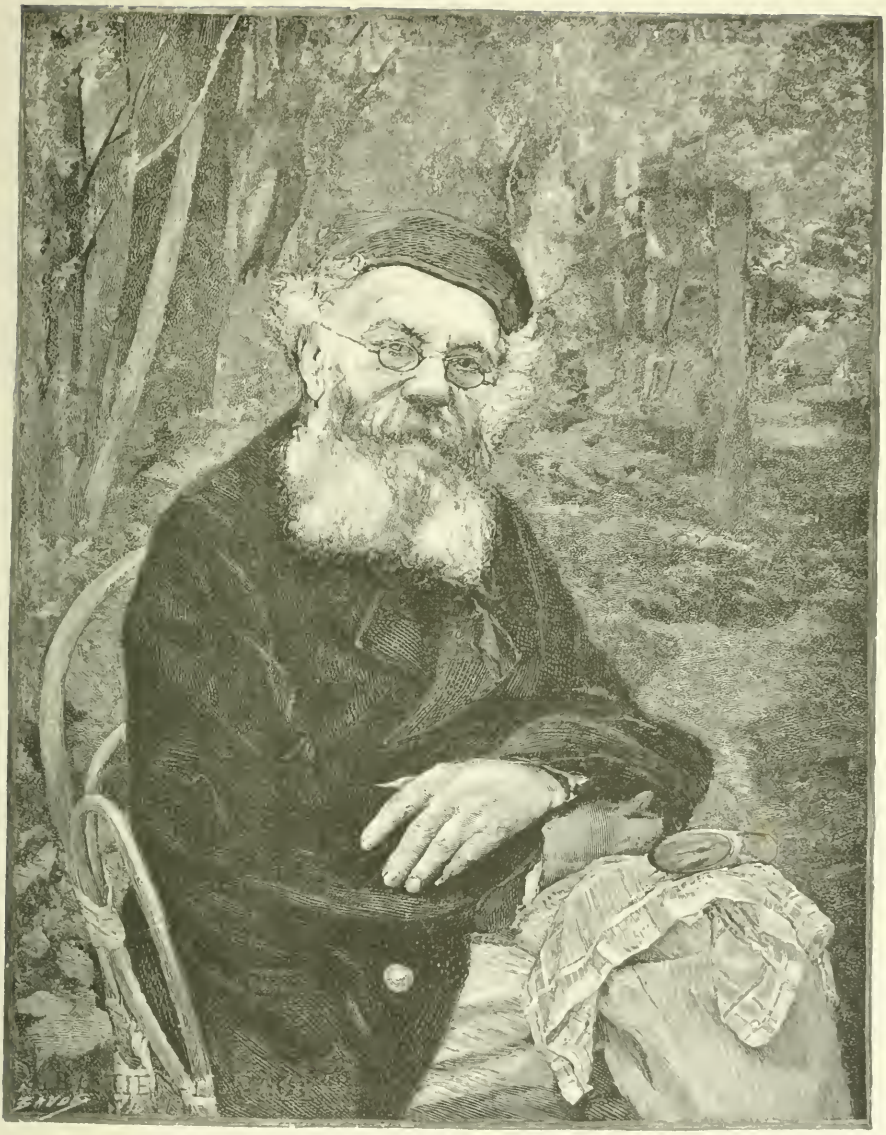
The perfumer wished for nothing better, but insisted on one condition; above the fountain was to be placed on a scroll of all the colours of the rainbow, the name of the cosmetic, and the address of the place where it was sold.

Naturally Bastien refused, and the tradesman, disappointed of his advertisement, left him the picture for his trouble.

This painting was exhibited in the Salon of 1873, under the title of Au Printemps (In Spring); being placed very high it attracted no attention.

Jules was not discouraged, but he was a prey to that restless and feverish indecision which commonly besets beginners. The teaching in the school troubled him, and being a great admirer of Puvis de Chavannes, he was tempted to try decorative and allegorical painting.

His second picture, La Chanson du Printemps (The Song of Spring), exhibited in 1874, is conceived and executed under this influence. It represents a young peasant girl seated at the edge of a wood, bordered by a meadow which slopes down to a Meusian village, whose red-tiled roofs are seen in the distance. The girl



Grandfather Lepage.

By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

is sitting, with wide-open eyes, her arm passed through the bowed handle of a rustic basket strewn with violets, while from behind her nude little children with butterflies' wings and blowing upon pipes, whisper to her the song of the growing grass, and tell her of coming womanhood.

This light and spring-like picture, half realistic, half symbolical, would, perhaps, in spite of its simple charm, have left the public indifferent if it had not been accompanied by another, which suddenly brought the artist into the light, and was the success of the Salon of 1874.

During his last holiday at Damvillers, Bastien-Lepage had conceived the idea of painting the portrait of his grandfather, in the open air, in the little garden which the old man loved to cultivate.

The grandfather was represented seated in a garden chair, holding on his knees his horn snuff-box and his handkerchief of blue cotton. His striking face stood out well detached from the background of trees; the black velvet cap sloping jauntily towards his ear gave effect to the shrewd Socratic face; his blue eyes twinkled with humour; the nose was broad and retroussé; the white forked beard spread itself over an ancient vest of the colour of dead leaves; the

hands, painted like life, were crossed upon the grey trousers.

Before this picture, so true, so frank, of such marvellous intensity of familiar life, the public stood delighted, and the name of Bastien-Lepage, unknown before, figured the next day in the first place in the articles on the Salon.

II.

IT was in front of this picture that I first met Jules. Having looked in my catalogue for the name of the painter, I was delighted to find that he was from the Meuse, and born at that same Damvillers where I had once lived.

The heavy soil of our department is not fruitful in artists. When it has produced one it takes a rest for a few centuries.

Since Ligier Richier, the celebrated sculptor, born at the end of the fifteenth century, the Meuse could only claim credit for the painter Yard a clever decorator of churches and houses in the time of Duke Stanislas; so I was quite proud to find that Bastien-Lepage was a fellow countryman of mine. A few moments later a mutual friend introduced us to each other.

I saw before me a young man, plainly dressed, small, fair, and muscular; his pale face, with its square

determined brow, short nose, and spiritual lips, scarcely covered with a blond moustache, was lighted up by two clear blue eyes whose straight and piercing look told of loyalty and indomitable energy. There was roguishness as well as manliness in that mobile face with its flattened features, and a certain cool audacity alternated with signs of sensitiveness and sparkling fun and gaiety.

Remembrances of our native province, our common love of the country and of life in the open air, soon established kindly relations between us, and after two or three meetings we had entered upon a close friendship.

The portrait of the grandfather had won for him a third medal, and had ensured him a place in the sunshine.

It was not yet a money success, but it was a certain degree of fame; he might go back to his village with his heart at rest, his head high. The State had just bought his picture, La Chanson du Printemps (The Song of Spring), and orders were beginning to come in.

In 1875 Bastien-Lepage reappeared in the Salon with La Communiante (The Communicant) and the portrait of M. Simon Hayem, two excellent works



The Communicant.
By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

which gave, each in its way, a new mark of his originality.

The portrait of M. Hayem was best liked by men of the world; artists were most struck by La Communiante.

This young girl's simple awkward bearing, as she stands out from a creamy background, with all the stiffness of her starched white veil, naïvely opening her pure hazel eyes, and crossing her fingers, ill at ease in the white gloves, is a marvel of truthful painting. It reminds one of the manner of Memling and of Clouet, though with quite a modern feeling. It is interesting, as being the first of those small, lifelike, characteristic portraits, in a style at once broad and conscientious, which may be reckoned among the most perfect of this painter's works.

At the time of these successes in the Salon, Bastien joined in the competition for the Prix de Rome. The subject chosen for 1875 was taken from the New Testament—L'Annonciation aux Bergers (The Annunciation to the Shepherds).

I remember as if it were yesterday that July morning when the gates of the Palais des Beaux Arts were opened, and the crowd of eager inquirers rushed into the hall of the competition.

After a few minutes Bastien's picture was surrounded, and a buzz of approval arose from the groups of young people gathered round that work, so real, so strongly conceived and executed that the other nine canvases disappeared as in a mist.

The artist had understood and treated the subject in a manner utterly different from the usual style of the Academy. It was familiar and touching, like a page of the Bible. The visit of the angel had surprised the shepherds sleeping by their fire in the open air; the oldest of them was kneeling before the apparition, and prostrated himself in adoration; the youngest was gazing with half-closed eyes, and his open lips and hands, with fingers apart, expressed astonishment and admiration. The angel, a graceful figure, with childlike almost feminine head, was showing with outstretched arm to the shepherds, Bethlehem in the distance surrounded by a miraculous halo.

This picture, which has both the charm of poetic legend and a manly grip of real life, was executed with uncommon grace and vigour; its very faults contributed to the realization of the effect aimed at.

Most of those who saw this work of Lepage declared that he would carry off the Prix de Rome

with a high hand; yet the jury decided otherwise. It was an older and more correct competitor who was sent to the Villa Medicis at the cost of the State.

For a moment Bastien-Lepage was troubled and discouraged by this decision. Not that he felt himself strongly attracted towards Rome and Italian art, but he knew that many people judge of an artist by his success. Among the people down in his province and in his own family the Prix de Rome would have been considered as an official recognition of his talent, and he regretted, above all, not being able to give this satisfaction to his relations, who had undergone so many privations in order to maintain him at Paris. That he did not soon forget this unmerited check, we may gather from this fragment of a letter to a friend:

"I learned my business in Paris, I shall not forget that; but my art I did not learn there. I should be sorry to undervalue the high qualities and the devotion of the masters who direct the school. But is it my fault if I have found in their studio the only doubts that have tormented me? When I came to Paris I knew nothing at all, but I had never dreamed of that heap of formulas they pervert one

with. In the school I have drawn gods and goddesses, Greeks and Romans, that I knew nothing about, that I did not understand, and even laughed at. I used to say to myself that this might be high art; I wonder sometimes now if anything has resulted from this education. . . ."

However, he did not consider himself beaten. The following year, at the same time that he was exhibiting his portrait of M. Wallon, he went in again for the Prix de Rome competition. This time it was less for his own sake than to give a satisfaction to his family and friends. He did not enter with any real feeling into this competition, the subject for which was: Priam suppliant Achille de lui rendre le corps de son fils Hector (Priam begging Achilles to restore to him the body of his son Hector). This picture, though a vigorous composition, tells almost nothing of the deep and poignant emotion of this episode of the Iliad.

Once more he failed to gain the prize, but this time he did not take it much to heart. He was occupied with more absorbing prospects: his last visit to Damvillers had bent his mind toward another ideal. Whatever he might say, his studies in the school had not been without their use to him. They had

developed in him the critical faculty. His repugnance to factitious and conventional art had driven him with more force to the exact and attentive observation of nature.

At Paris he had learned to compare, and to see better. The Meuse country, so little heroic, with its low hills, its limited horizons, its level plains, had appeared to him suddenly more attractive and more worthy of interest than the heroes of Greece and Rome. Our labourers driving the plough across the field; our peasant women with their large liquid eyes, prominent jaws, and widely opening mouths; our vine-dressers, their backs curved with the labour of the hoe, had revealed themselves to him as models much more attractive than those of the atelier. It was a work for a great artist to bring out the poetry pervading the village folk and their belongings and to give it a real existence, as it were, by means of line and colour. To represent the intoxicating odour of the mown grass, the heat of the August sun on the ripe corn, the life of the village street; to bring into relief the men and women who have their joys and sorrows there; to show the slow movement of thought, the anxieties about daily bread on faces with irregular and even vulgar features;—this is human

art, and consequently high art. This is what the Dutch painters did, and they created masterpieces. Bastien, while lounging among the orchards of Damvillers and the woods of Réville, resolved that he would do as they had done, that he would paint the peasants of the Meuse.

The list of studies begun or completed at this time shows us the progress of this dominant idea: La Paysanne au Repos (The Peasant Woman Reposing), La Prairie de Damvillers (The Meadow at Damvillers), the two sketches for the picture Les Foins (The Hay), Les Jardins au Printemps (Gardens in Spring), Les Foins Mûrs (Ripe Grasses), L'Aurore (Dawn)—all these canvases bear the date of 1876.

It was in the autumn of the same year that we carried out a long-talked-of plan for making an excursion together on foot into the Argonne. I went to join him in September at Damvillers.

Thanks to him, I saw with a very different feeling the town that formerly I thought so dull. Cordially and hospitably received in the house at the corner of the great square, I made the acquaintance of the father, with his calm, thoughtful face; of the grandfather, so cheerful in spite of his eighty years; of the mother, so full of life, so devoted, the best mother that

one could wish for an artist. I saw what a strong and tender union existed between the members of this family whose idol and whose pride was Jules.

We set out along with one of my old friends and the painter's young brother. For a week we walked with our bags on our backs through the forest country of the Argonne, going through woods from Varennes to La Chalade, and from Islettes to Beaulieu. The weather was rainy and unpleasant enough, but we were none the less gay for that, never winking when the rain came down, visiting the glass-works, admiring the deep gorges in the forests, the solitary pools in the midst of the woods, the miles of green and misty avenues at the foot of the hills.

Jules Bastien was always the leader. When we arrived at our resting-place in an evening, after a day of walking in the rain, he almost deafened us with scraps of *café-concert* songs, with which his memory was stored.

I seem still to hear in the dripping night that voice, clear and vibrating, now silent for ever. . . .

As we went along he told me of his plans for the future.

He wanted to tell the whole story of country life in a series of large pictures: hay-making, harvest,

seed-time, the lovers, the burial of a young girl. . . . He also wanted to paint a peasant woman as Jeanne d'Arc, at the moment when the idea of her divine mission is taking possession of her brain; then, a Christ in the Tomb.

Together we made a plan for publishing a series of twelve compositions: Les Mois Rustiques (The Months in the Country), for which he was to furnish the drawings and I the text.

From time to time we stopped at the opening of a wood or at the entrance of a village, and Jules would make a hasty sketch, little thinking that the wild and simple peasants of the Argonne would take us for Germans surreptitiously making notes of their roads and passes. At Saint Rouin, while we were looking on at a Pilgrimage, we had nearly been taken as spies. I have told this story elsewhere.* The remembrance of it amused us for a long time.

After eight days of this vagabond life we separated at Saint Mihiel, where Bastien wished to see the group of statues of the sepulchre, the *chef d'œuvre* of Ligier Richier, before beginning his Christ in the Tomb.

Shortly afterwards he gave an account of this visit in a letter to his friend Baude, the engraver:

* See *La Chanson du jardinier* in *Sous Bois*.

"Our too short walk through the Argonne has been very interesting, and ended with a visit to the grand *chef d'œuvre* of Ligier Richier at Saint Mihiel. You must see that some day. I have seen nothing in sculpture so touching. France ought to know better and to be prouder of that great Lorraine artist. You will see a photograph of this masterpiece when you come to me. . . ."

He had scarcely been six weeks at Damvillers again when he lost his father, who was suddenly carried off by pulmonary congestion. Death entered the house for the first time, and it was a rude shock for a family where each loved the other so well.

"We were too young to lose such a good friend," he wrote to me; "in spite of all the courage one can muster, the void, the frightful void is so great, that one is sometimes in despair. . . ."

". . . Happily remembrance remains (letter to M. Victor Klotz), and what a remembrance it is! . . . the purest that is possible;—he was goodness and self-abnegation personified; he loved us so! . . . What is to be done? We must try to fill the void with love for those who remain, and who are attached to us, always keeping in mind him who is gone, and working much to drive away the fixed idea."

And indeed he did work furiously: at Damvillers, at a Job that remains unfinished, and at Paris at the full-length portrait of a lady, which was exhibited in the Salon of 1877.

He had left the Rue Cherche Midi and had settled in the Impasse du Maine, where his studio and his apartment occupied one floor of a building, at the end of a narrow neglected garden, whose only ornaments were an apricot tree and some lilac bushes.

His brother Emile, who just then came to an end of his study of architecture in the school, lived with him.

His studio was very large, and was simply furnished with an old divan, a few stools, and a table covered with books and sketches. It was decorated only with the painter's own studies and a few hangings of Japanese material.

I used to go there every morning at this time to sit for my portrait.

I used to arrive about eight o'clock, to find Jules already up, but with his eyes only half awake, swallowing two raw eggs, to give himself tone, as he said.

He already complained of stomach trouble, and lived by rule. We used to smoke a cigarette, and then



THE HAYFIELD.
By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

he began to work. He painted with a feverish rapidity, and with a certainty of hand quite astonishing. Sometimes he would stop, get up and roll a cigarette, would closely examine the face of his model, and then, after five minutes of silent contemplation, he would sit down again with the vivacity of a monkey and begin to paint furiously.

The portrait, sketched in during the snows of January, was almost finished when the apricot tree began to put on its covering of white flowers in April.

Immediately after the opening of the Salon, Bastien packed up his baggage and fled to Damvillers to prepare for his great picture Les Foins (The Hayfield), which occupied him all the summer of 1877, and of which he gave me news from time to time.

"*July.*—I shall not say much about my work; the subject is not yet sufficiently sketched in. What I can tell you is that I am going to give myself up to a debauch in pearly tones: half-dry hay and flowering grasses; and this in the sunshine, looking like a pale yellow tissue with silver threads running through it.

"The clumps of trees on the banks of the stream and in the meadow will stand out strongly with a rather Japanese effect. . . .

"15th *August*.—Your verses are just the picture I should like to paint. They smell of the hay and the heat of the meadow. . . . If my hay smells as well as yours I shall be content. . . . My young peasant is sitting with her arms apart, her face hot and red; her fixed eyes seeing nothing; her attitude altogether broken and weary. I think she will give the true idea of a peasant woman. Behind her, flat on his back, her companion is asleep, with his hands closed; and beyond, in the meadow, in the full sun, the haymakers are beginning to work again. I have had hard work to set up my first ideas, being determined to keep simply to the true aspect of a bit of nature. Nothing of the usual willow arrangement, with its branches drooping over the heads of the people to frame the scene. Nothing of that sort. My people stand out against the half-dry hay. There is a little tree in one corner of the picture to show that other trees are near, where the men are gone to rest in the shade. The whole tone of the picture will be a light grey green. . . ."

"*September*.—Why didn't you come, lazy fellow? You would have seen my Hay before it was finished. Lenoir, the sculptor, my neighbour in the Impasse, liked it. The country people say it is alive. I have

little more than the background to finish. I am going to harness myself to the Reapers, and to a nude study of a Diogenes the cynic, or rather, the sceptic. . . . "

Les Foins was sent to the Salon in 1878. It had a great success, though it was warmly discussed.

In the hall where it was placed, among the pictures which surrounded it, this picture gave an extraordinary sensation of light and of the open air. It had the effect of a large open window.

The meadow, half mown, went back bathed with sunshine, under a summer sky, flecked with light clouds. The young haymaker sitting drooping in the heat, intoxicated with the smell of the hay, her eyes fixed, her limbs relaxed, her mouth open, was wonderfully real. There was nothing of the conventional peasant whose hands look as if they had never touched a tool, but a veritable countrywoman accustomed from childhood to outdoor work. One felt that she was weary with fatigue, and glad to breathe a moment at her ease, after a morning of hard work in the sun.

This picture of life in the fields, so carefully studied, so powerfully rendered, had a considerable influence on the painting of the day. From the time of this

exhibition many young painters, many foreign artists especially, threw themselves with enthusiasm into the new way opened out by Bastien-Lepage, and, without intention on his part, the painter of the Meusian peasants became the head of a school.

III.

BASTIEN did not allow himself to be spoiled by success, but continued his life of assiduous labour and conscientious research. He divided his time between Paris and Damvillers, giving the larger part to his village.

We have a long list of his works done in 1878 and 1879. Portraits of M. and Mme. Victor Klotz and of their children, of MM. de Gosselin, of M. A. Lenoir, of M. de Tinan, of the publisher George Charpentier, of Emile Bastien, of Sarah Bernhardt, and lastly that Saison d'Octobre, or, Recolte des Pommes de terre (October, or The Potato Harvest) which is the companion picture to Les Foins (Hay). This was in a graver key, with warm yet sober colours, and an exquisite savour of the country in the late summer; it was powerfully executed and full of health and serenity.

The portrait of Sarah Bernhardt and The Potato

Harvest, less discussed than The Hay, made a deep impression on the mass of the public.

Dating from this time, Bastien's success, both artistic and monetary, was secure.

His first care was to let his friends at Damvillers join in his good fortune.

They had been with him in his difficulties, they should now share his pleasure, and he brought them to Paris in the summer of 1879. He was happy to return to them, in all sorts of kind attentions, a little of what he owed them for so much affectionate devotion. He was grateful to them for having believed in him in his time of difficulty as a beginner, and he experienced a tender pride in being able to show them that they had not been mistaken.

When he received his first important gains he took his mother to a large shop and had silks for dresses spread out before her. "Show some more," cried he. "I want Mama to choose the best." And the poor little mother, frightened at the sight of black satin that could stand upright of itself, in vain protested that "she would never wear that." She was obliged to give way.

He took his grandfather through the avenues of the Bois and the principal boulevards, expecting that he



Sarah Bernhardt.

By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

would be delighted; but in this direction his zealous efforts failed utterly. The old man remained indifferent to the splendours of Parisian luxury and to the scenery in the theatres. At the opera he yawned openly, declaring that all this commotion was deafening, and he went back to Damvillers determined that they should never take him away again.

After having seen his people into the train for their return, he set out for England, where he painted the Prince of Wales.

Decorated in the following July, he hastened to Damvillers to show his red ribbon to his friends, and also to go on with the work he loved best.

He had managed to arrange a studio in the spacious and lofty granaries of the paternal house, and there he worked hard.

He hoped at last to realize his dream, so long deferred, of painting a Jeanne d'Arc. He had meditated much on this subject, and we have often spoken of it.

His idea was to paint Jeanne in the little orchard at Domrémy at the moment when she hears, for the first time, the mysterious voices sounding in her ears the call to deliver her country.

To give more precision to the scene, Bastien wished

to show, through the branches of the trees, the "blessed saints," whose voices encouraged the heroic shepherdess.

In this I differed from him. I maintained that he ought to suppress these fantastic apparitions, and that the expression of Jeanne's face alone should explain to the spectator the emotion caused by the hallucination to which she was a prey. I reminded him of the sleep-walking scene in Macbeth: the doctor and the chamber-woman, I said, do not see the terrible things that dilate the pupils of Lady Macbeth, but from her face and gestures they know that there is something terrible; the effect is only the greater, because, after having perceived this, the imagination of the spectator increases it. Suppress your phantoms and your picture will gain in sincerity and dramatic intensity.

But Jules held to the personification of the voices, and our discussions ended without either the one or the other being convinced. Nevertheless, my objection had impressed him, and he wanted to show his work to his friends before it was quite finished.

"Come," he wrote to me, about the 15th of September, "F. is quite disposed to come; he really wants to come to Damvillers. Everything will go



JOAN OF ARC LISTENING TO THE VOICES.
By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

beautifully. You will see my picture of Jeanne d'Arc well advanced, and somebody coming from Paris will do me no harm. . . ."

"If you knew how I work (letter to Ch. Baude) you would be less surprised. My picture is getting on, and getting on well; all, except the voices, is sketched, and some parts are begun. I think I have found a head for my Jeanne d'Arc, and everybody thinks she expresses well the resolution to set out, while keeping the charming simplicity of the peasant. Also, I think the attitude is very chaste and very sweet, as it ought to be in the figure that I want to represent; . . . but if I am to see you soon, I prefer to leave you the pleasure of surprise and of the first impression of the picture; you will judge of it better, and you will be able to say better what you think of it. . . ."

Jeanne d'Arc appeared in the Salon of 1880, with the portrait of M. Andrieux. It did not produce all the effect that Jules expected. The picture had its enthusiastic admirers, but also passionate detractors. The critics attacked first the want of air and of perspective; then, as I had foreseen, the *voices*, represented by three symbolical personages, too slightly indicated to be understood, and yet too

precise for apparitions. But the public did not do justice to the admirable figure of Jeanne, standing, motionless, quivering, her eyes dilated by the vision, her left hand extended, and mechanically fingering the leaves of a shrub growing near.

Never had Bastien-Lepage created a figure more poetically true than this Lorraine shepherdess, so pure, so human, so profoundly absorbed in her heroic ecstasy.

The rapid and brilliant success of the young master had ruffled the *amour propre* of many; they made him pay for these precocious smiles of glory by undervaluing his new work. He had hoped that the medal of honour would be given to his Jeanne d'Arc; this distinction was given to an artist of talent, but whose work had neither the originality, nor the qualities of execution, nor the importance of Bastien's picture. He felt this injustice strongly and went to London; there the reception and appreciation of English artists and amateurs consoled him a little for this new mortification.

The two years that followed were fruitful in vigorous work of different kinds: Les Blés Mûrs (Ripe Corn), the London Docks, The Thames, Le Paysan allant voir son champ le dimanche (The

Peasant Going to Look at his Field on Sunday), La Petite Fille allant à l'école (The little Girl Going to School); the portraits of M. and of Mme. Goudchaux, of Mdlle. Damain, of Albert Wolff, and of Mme. W., La Marchande de Fleurs (The Flower Girl); last of all, the two great pictures Le Mendiant (The Beggar), and Père Jacques, exhibited in the Salon in 1881 and 1882.

His stay in London and the reading of Shakspeare had inspired him with the idea of painting one of the heroines of the great poet, and in 1881 he went back to Damvillers full of a project for painting the Death of Ophelia.

"I have been painting hard" (letter to Ch. Baude, August, 1881), "for I want to go away and travel for two or three weeks. At the end of September you will come and see us. That is settled, is it not? Shooting, amusements, friendship. Since my return I have painted a haymaker and worked at a little picture of an interior: The Cuvier à Lessive (The Washing Kitchen); all the detail requires much time. Besides I have begun and already advanced a large picture of Ophelia. I think it will be well to do something as a contrast to my Mendiant (Beggar). It is to be a really touching Ophelia, as heartrending as if one actually saw her.

"The poor distracted girl no longer knows what she is doing, but her face shows traces of sorrow and of madness. She is close to the edge of the water leaning against a willow; upon her lips, the smile left by her last song; in her eyes, tears! Supported only by a branch, she is slipping unawares; the stream is quite close to her. In a moment she will be in it. She is dressed in a little greenish blue bodice, and a white skirt with large folds; her pockets are full of flowers, and behind her is a river-side landscape. One bank under trees, with tall flowering grasses, and thousands of hemlock flowers, like stars in the sky; and in the higher part of the picture, a wooded slope; and the evening sun shining through birches and hazel bushes; that is the scene"

This picture was never finished. The landscape and flowers were rendered as the artist wished, but the face and the costume of Ophelia recalled his Jeanne d'Arc too much.

Bastien-Lepage no doubt saw this, and for this reason put the picture on one side to return to his peasants.

The more he become master of his brush, the more the rustic work haunted him. He was still a thorough countryman. Although he had now at



THE BEGGAR.

By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

intervals the refinements of elegance and little bursts of worldliness; although he had exchanged the modest *atelier* in the Impasse du Maine for a house in the Quartier Monceau, the world soon wearied him, and he was glad to go back to his village.

This six weeks' absence, of which he speaks in his letter to his friend Baude, was spent in an excursion to Venice, and in Switzerland. He came back only half delighted, and brought back only a few unimportant sketches.

Italy and the splendours of Venetian art had left him cold. In this world of history and mythology he was not at home He sickened for his meadows and his Meusian forests.

During his rapid visits to Paris in 1881 and 1882, the painting of various portraits, notably that of Madame Juliette Drouet, and the compulsory tax of visits and soirées occupied him almost entirely. We saw but little of him. But these successes, and the adulation lavished upon him in Parisian drawing-rooms, did not change him.

He was still the loyal, joyous comrade, faithful to old ties; very good, very simple; happy as a child when he found himself in a circle of intimate friends.

We were both members and even founders of an

Alsace-Lorraine dinner, the Dîner de l'Est, which was always given in summer in the country. One of the last meetings at which he was present, took place at the end of May, 1881.

A boat had been engaged, which was to take the diners to the bridge at Suresnes, and to bring them back at night. When we arrived at the landing-stage, a blind man was standing by the footbridge, attended by a young girl, who held out her sebilla to the passers-by.

"Come, gentlemen! all of you, put your hands in your pockets!" gaily commanded Bastien, and he passed over first, preaching by example. And the eighty, or a hundred guests of the Dîner de l'Est, passed one after another over the footbridge, each one leaving in the child's sebilla a coin, large or small.

When we were on the deck, Bastien turned round to look at the blind man and his girl, who were amazed at this unexpected windfall, and were slowly counting their money.

"What a lovely group?" he said to me. "How I should like to paint that child!"

While waiting for dinner we walked in the Bois de Boulogne. The acacias and hawthorns were in flower. The lawns, newly shorn, gave out a perfume

of mown grass. Jules, joyfully drawing in this air impregnated with country odours, laughed like a happy child.

At that moment all was going well with him. His Mendiant had had a great success at the Salon; his last visit to England had been very prosperous; his head was full of fine projects for pictures. "It is good to be alive!" he exclaimed, as he played with a flower he had plucked from the bushes. . . . On the way back he gave himself up to all sorts of roguish fun. Mounted on the prow of the boat he sang, with his full voice, the Chant du Départ.

The vibrating tones resounded powerfully between the two sleeping river banks; the sky was splendid, twinkling with innumerable stars. From time to time Bastien lighted a rocket and sent it up overhead, shouting a loud hurrah!

The fusée mounted slowly into the night, showering down many-coloured sparks, then fell suddenly and sank in the dark water. Alas! it was the image of the short and brilliant years that remained for him to live.

IV.

ON the death of Gambetta, January 1, 1883, Bastien was commissioned to make a design for the funeral car in which the great orator was to be conveyed to Père Lachaise; he spent a week in the little room at Ville d'Avray, painting the picture representing the statesman on his death-bed. The cold was extreme at this time, and, his work scarcely finished, he went away, feeling ill, to Damvillers, where he hoped to finish the great picture he had began of L'Amour au Village.

His native air, the simple life, and his mother's loving care restored him, and he began to work again with his usual eagerness.

Muffled in a warm jacket and a travelling cloak that covered him down to the feet, he made his models pose for him in the piercing days of February, in the little garden where he had already painted the portrait of his grandfather. In March

the work was well advanced, and he invited me to go and see it at Damvillers before it was sent to the Salon. I left Verdun on a freezing afternoon, accompanied by the old friend who had walked with us through the Argonne, and we were set down at Damvillers at night-fall. Our hosts were awaiting us on the doorstep; the grandfather, always the same, with his Greek cap and white beard, and his Socratic face; the painter and the little mother, with smiles and outstretched hands.

Around them Basse the spaniel, and Golo and Barbeau were bounding and barking joyfully to give us a welcome.

The next morning, early, we went up to the studio to see L'Amour au Village, which was to go to Paris that day.

The subject of this picture is well known; it is one of the most real and the most original that the artist has painted: the daylight is waning; at the gate of a village garden, a lad of twenty, who has been binding sheaves, and still wears his leggings of leather, is talking, leaning against a fence, with a young girl, who turns her back to the spectator; what he is saying to her may be guessed from his awkward manner of twisting his stiff fingers, and

also from the attentive but embarrassed air of the young girl. One feels that they are not saying much, but that love exhales from every word, so difficult to speak. Around them summer spreads the robust verdure of the country. The fruit trees stand lightly silhouetted against a background of kitchen herbs, gently sloping up to the houses of the village, whose brown roofs and pointed spire come against the soft and misty twilight sky. All this, bathed in a subdued light, is marvellously painted. The young girl, her short plaits falling over her shoulders, her neck bent, the form of her back, so young, so delicate, is an exquisite figure; the face of the young harvester, so energetic, so ingenuously in love, is charming in expression; the treatment of the hands, the bust, the dress, is masterly. There is in this picture a true and manly poetry, which is strengthening and refreshing, like the odour of ripe corn.

Bastien was glad to have completed this difficult work, and his satisfaction enabled him to bear with cheerfulness the pains in his loins, and the digestive troubles which were becoming more and more frequent.

It was long since I had seen him so gay and unre-

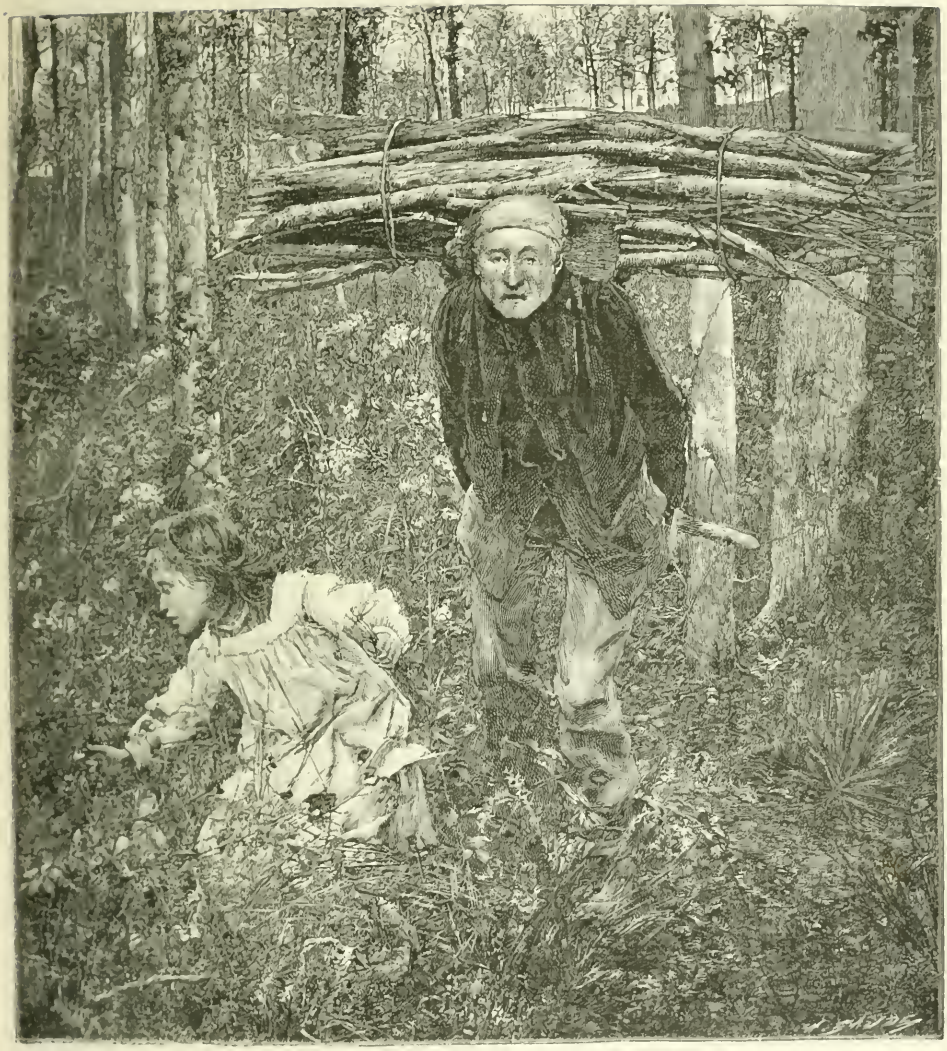
served. This happy holiday-week spent at Damvillers was the pendant to the walk through the Argonne. The sullen sky, continually blotted out by chilling showers, allowed us few walks in the open air; but every morning we went up to the studio. Jules dismissed the little sweep, who was sitting for a picture that he had on hand, and, taking a sheet of copper, he made us pose for an etching. I have this plate before me now; it did not bite well. It represents the whole family, including the grandfather, making a circle round our friend F., who, standing up and very grave, is reciting one of La Fontaine's fables. While I look at it, I seem to hear again the merry laughter which filled the studio, alternating with the rattling of the hail against the windows.

In the evening, after supper, we placed ourselves at the round table, and played at Diable or Nain rouge. Jules, throwing away his best cards, always managed to let the grandfather win; and when the octogenarian, quite proud of his success, took up the stakes, he would pat him on the shoulder, and cry out, with a merry twinkle of the eye, "Ha! what a lucky man! he will ruin us all!" and the laughter began again.

We did not go to bed till well on into the night,

after having roused the little domestic, Felix, who had dozed off in the kitchen while copying a portrait of Victor Hugo.

In the intervals of sunshine, Bastien-Lepage took us to visit "his fields." He had a peasant's love for the land, and he employed his gains in adding to the paternal domains. He had just bought an orchard situated in the old moat of the town, which had belonged to an unfrocked priest. He intended to build a châlet there, where his friends, painters or poets, might come and live in their holidays and dream at their ease. He explained to us with the delight of a child, his plans for the future. When, with his portraits, he should have gained an independent fortune, he would execute at his ease and in freedom, the grand rustic pictures that he dreamed of, and among others, that burial of a young village girl, for which he had already made many notes and sketched the principal details. We only took one long walk, and it was in those woods of Réville which form the background of his landscape, Ripe Corn. The weather had remained cold, and there were still patches of snow on the backs of the grey hills, though the sun shone sometimes. Except a few downy buds on the willows, the woods were without verdure; but



Father Jacques, the Woodman.
By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

the ploughed fields had a beautiful brown colour; the larks sang; the tops of the beeches began to have that reddish hue, which indicates the rising of the sap, the swelling buds. "Look," said Bastien to me, when we were in the forest, "my Wood-cutter in the last Salon was reproached with want of air. . . . Well, here we are in a wood, and the trees are still without leaves, yet look how little the figure stands out from the undergrowth of trees and bushes. There is a great deal of routine and prejudice in that criticism of the perspective of my pictures done in the open air. It is the criticism of people who have never looked at a landscape, except crouching down or sitting. When you sit down to paint, you naturally see things quite differently from the way you see them standing. Sitting, you see more sky and you have more objects—trees, houses, or living beings standing out sharply in silhouette against the sky, which gives the illusion of a greater distance and a wider atmosphere. But it is not in this way that we generally see a landscape. We look at it standing, and then the objects, animate or inanimate, that are nearest to us, instead of being seen in profile against the sky, are silhouetted upon the trees, or upon the fields, grey or green. They stand out with

less clearness, and sometimes mix with the background, which then, instead of going away, seems to come forward. We need to renew the education of our eye, by looking with sincerity upon things as they are in nature, instead of holding as absolute truths the theories and conventions of the school and the studio."

All the afternoon passed thus happily away in friendly talking and slow smoking along the wooded paths. The blackbirds were whistling; from time to time we discovered a flower in the open spaces, which showed that spring was surely coming; a wood anemone, with its milk-white petals, or a branch of mezereon, with its pink flowers opening before the leaves, and its Japanese appearance.

Jules stopped and gathered a stem of black hellebore. "Ah, how beautiful!" he said. "How one would like to make a careful study of these leaves—so decorative, so finely cut—of dark green, almost brown, out of which comes this pale green stem, with its clusters of greenish flowers edged with pale rose-colour. What lovely forms, and what a variety of tender shades! This is what they ought to give as a copy to the children in the schools of design, instead of the eternal and wearisome Diana de Gabies!"



Sketch for Father Jacques

We did not return till evening, when there was a magnificent sunset, which crimsoned the smoky roofs of Réville, and made the light clouds scattered over the sky look like a strew of rose-leaves.

The next day was the last of my visit. We took leave after long embraces, making fine plans for returning to Damvillers for the September holiday, while the grandfather, shaking his hoary head, murmured sadly, "Who knows if you will find me here?" And Barbeau, and Golo, and Basse bounded and barked round the omnibus that took us away with tremendous noise.

I did not see Jules again till a month later, at the opening of the Salon, in front of L'Amour au Village, which had a full success. He was ill, and complained of pains in the loins more acute than formerly; then he suddenly disappeared mysteriously. The door of the atelier in Rue Legendre was closed, and visitors were told that the painter was gone into the country. We did not know till later that he had hidden himself, to undergo a sharp and painful treatment, and that, scarcely convalescent, he had gone to breathe the sea air in Brittany, at Concarneau. He spent his days there, in a boat, painting the sea, and forgetting his pains by the help of work.

When he came to see us again in October, he appeared to be recovered; but digestion was still a difficulty, and his habitual gaiety was, as it were, clouded over. His character was changed. There were no more of those trenchant affirmations of which his comrades sometimes complained; he was indulgent, and even affectionate, much more than was usual with him. He did not stay long in Paris, but hastened back to Damvillers, to get seriously to work again. He arrived in time to be present during his grandfather's last moments. The old man departed loaded with years; but, though surely expected, his death was a painful blow to the survivors. "The house," he wrote, "is empty more than one could believe. Only a few days ago, at any moment, a door would open and the grandfather appeared, without motive, without object, without speaking or being spoken to; but the sight of his kindly face was enough. One kissed him, and he went away, as before, without object, sitting down, going into the garden, coming back, and always with the same kind face. I remember now that he has been growing paler for some days. . . . No, you can have no idea how empty the house is. I cannot get accustomed to it. We often talk of him with my

mother—with what pleasure! It is not that we weep for him with tears; we reason about it, and we appear resigned and courageous; but behind all that there is a sad feeling of want, of absolute loss. It is the touch one wants. . . . I have been ill with it, and am so still. I have not been able to work; to-day, for the first time, I went out to shoot larks; the weather was fine, the sun was shining, and the country beautiful. This did me good."

Indeed, the health of the artist, far from improving, was becoming daily more uncertain. "It is the digestive tube," said he, "that is out of order." Nevertheless, he worked with his usual courage, overlooking his Concarneau studies, planning a new picture, and only stopping to go out shooting or to saunter through the woods.

"Our evening walks are the best part of the day" —(letter to Ch. Bande, Nov. 27, 1883)—"that is, from the setting of the sun till it is dark. Every night the spectacle is new. The programme changes with the weather. Sometimes the subject of the piece is dramatic; the next day it is soft and charming; and, with the constant rain, our inundated meadows reflect the brilliant scenery. Can you imagine all our pleasure, in your dingy Paris? The

next morning is too slow in coming; one wants so much to put down last night's impression; so that I am making a heap of sketches, and find much pleasure in it. Then—here is a surprise!—I have a new picture on the way. . . . Guess! . . . The subject is a wounded deer taken by the dogs. The scene is, naturally, the wood, and the wood at this time of year: only a few leaves of brilliant yellow against the marvellous rosy-grey of the branches of the trees; then the violet tone of the dead leaves flattened on the soil, and a few green briars round a pool under a willow. The place was not chosen by me. The deer chose it himself to die there; for I killed him the other day, and he went there to be taken, a hundred yards from where he was shot—just opposite the spot where Minet killed a hare. It was then that this picture struck me. Afterwards I sketched in and reconstructed the scene; and, as I wanted a model, I killed a second deer. . . ."

Here is a characteristic symptom: he who formerly only wrote the shortest of notes, scribbled in haste at the corner of a table, now sent long, expansive letters to his friends, showing signs of redoubled love of life, of art, of the beauties of nature:—

"My dear friends" (Jan. 3, 1884), "if you could

see your poor Bastien, with this heap of letters to write, you would certainly say: 'How he is changed!' . . . If my wishes had the extraordinary virtue of fulfilling themselves, I should like that you, whom I love, should profit by it, and that 1884 should bring health and happiness and success to all. My mother's wishes are the same as mine, and she rejoices that we are to see you soon. Ah, my dear friend, what pleasure you would have in living upon the woods, as I feed upon them now almost every day, along with Golo and Barbeau! What marvellously delicate tones! and the fading out of daylight, and when the evening comes on! The woods are exquisitely fine, with their tall, dry, ivory-coloured grasses; they are so tall in some of the open spaces that they caress your face as you pass, and the cool touch upon your face and hands, hot with walking, is a delicious sensation. I rarely leave the woods before night, for I must send up a few salutes to the wild ducks with my gun before going in. One hears them coming from a great distance, but it is difficult to judge if they are far away or near, from the peculiarity of their cry; so they have often passed, and are already a good way off, before one finds out that one has missed them.

"This is to let you know that I am not a stay-at-home, as you might think. I find it important to walk a good deal, for in this way I regain a little health. My stomach was beginning to get wrong, but it is better! . . ."

A few days after this I met a mutual friend of ours. "Well," he said to me, "our poor Bastien is very ill. . . . They think it is hopeless."

V.

INDEED he was very ill. The treatment he had undergone in the summer of 1883 had not been successful. The pains in the loins and bowels had returned with greater violence at the end of January.

By the advice of his friend Dr. Watelet he again went to Paris in March to consult Dr. Potain. Without any illusions as to the fatal nature of the disease, the doctors thought that a change of air and of climate might, morally and physically, produce good results. They advised that he should go to Algiers for two months.

Bastien himself, seized with that longing desire for movement which often torments invalids who are seriously ill, had experienced a wish to go to the south. It was decided that he should start as soon as possible for Algiers, accompanied by his servant Felix, and by his mother.

On the morning of the day fixed for starting I went to the Rue Legendre to say good-bye to him. He had gone to complete some arrangements with his picture-agent. I found only Mme. Bastien, who was occupied in filling the trunks which were scattered about the studio. The brave little mother, who had never left her home at Damvillers for more than a few days together, was preparing for this long journey to an unknown country quite simply, with an apparent tranquillity, as if she were going as far as Saint Cloud.

The hope that the change might be good for Jules was enough to give her courage to face this upsetting of all her old ways of living. Sometimes only, when she was carefully arranging the linen in the trunk, the tears would rise to her eyes and a quiver of pain pass over her lips.

Upon the chairs and against the walls were placed the recent studies brought from Damvillers, and one felt one's heart tighten at the sight of these last works, where nature had been observed and rendered with incomparable skill, penetration, and charm. They were The Frog-fisher, The Little Sweep, The Washerwoman, The Pond at Damvillers, The Edge of the Wood, The Church at Concarneau, and that

study of A Midnight Sky so original, with the clouds scattered over an azure that was almost black.

At this moment Bastien-Lepage came in, and on seeing him walk with difficulty into the studio, I was distressed at the change that had come over him. His thin face had become quite bloodless; the skin of his neck was peeling off; his hair seemed to have no life in it. His questioning blue eyes expressed an anguish and weariness that was heartrending. "Well," said he, after having embraced me, "are you looking at my studies? When people see them at George Petit's, they will say that the little Bastien could paint the landscape too, when he gave himself the trouble! . . ." When I said to him that his long absence that morning had made his mother anxious, he added quite low, and taking me into one corner of the studio: "When one is going to take a journey so far, one must prepare for it. . . . I wanted to put my affairs in order. Poor little mother!" he went on; "she has been very brave! Down at home she used to spend whole nights in rubbing me for my rheumatism, and I let her think that it did me good. . . . Now, perhaps the Algiers sun will cure me." Hope alternated with discouragement. During breakfast he recovered a little. I was to go to Spain at

the end of March; he urged me to change my plans, and to join him in Algiers. We ended with a half-promise. We tried hard to appear gay; we clinked our glasses as we drank to the hope of soon meeting again, but each one felt his throat tighten, and turned away to hide from the other his moist eyes. I left the house in the Rue Legendre with my heart full of the saddest forebodings.

Jules left the same night for Marseilles. They had a good crossing, and his first letter, dated March 17th, was reassuring :—

"My dear friends, there is no getting out of it; you must come, for a thousand reasons. Here it is just like May in Paris. Everything is in flower; and such flowers!—heaps of them, everywhere. The verdure is delicate and grey, and, like patches, always well placed; the outlines picturesque and new, the trees very dark green. And in the midst of all this, upon the roads, the Arabs, of astonishing calmness and splendid carriage, under their earth-coloured and ash-coloured draperies—ragamuffins as proud as kings, and better dressed than Talma. They all wear a shirt and burnous; not one is like another. It seems as if each one, at every moment, gave expression to his thought by his

manner of draping his garment. It is once more the triumph of blank truth over arrangement and conventionalism. The sorrowful man, whether he wishes it or not, in spite of himself is not draped like the gay. Beauty, I am convinced, is exact truth: neither to the right nor to the left, but in the middle.

"All this without telling you we have hired a house at Mustapha Superior. It is half Arab, half French, quite white, with an interior court opening into a garden twice as big as that at Damvillers. The garden is full of orange-trees, and lemon, almond, fig, and a quantity of other trees, the names of which I do not know and probably never shall. All this, not trim like a park, but left a little *à la diable*, like our garden at home. Then we have the right of walking in a magnificent garden which joins ours. We have at least eight rooms; in counting them I thought of you. In all directions round this house there are delightful walks within reach for invalid limbs; in short, it is a Mahomet's Paradise, . . . '*moins les femmes.*' I have said nothing about Kasbah, the old Arab town—my legs have only let me see it from a distance as yet; but, my good friend, imagine that against a morning sky you have, some-

times in the palest rose, sometimes in silvery grey, sometimes in faint blue, and so on — everywhere against the pearly sky—more or less elongated rectangles, placed irregularly, but always horizontally, in the manner of a line of low hills, and you will have the delicate colouring of the old town. One would not suppose it was a town with habitations, so delicate is the tone of it, but for some little holes of rare windows placed here and there. One could not have a sensation more unexpected, and never a sweeter and finer joy. So you must come! My mother is counting upon it, and what, then, am I? What new things you could say about all this! The sea was very fine at the beginning and end of our crossing. Midway some of the passengers suffered: my mother and Felix among them, but they got some sleep. We were twenty hours in crossing, and we were not tired on arriving. Come, set off; start! . . . A good embrace from my mother and from me."

His first letter, as may be seen, was full of ardour. The climate of Algeria did him good at first, and his sufferings seemed to be relieved.

"I am preparing myself bravely for the ordeal by fire" (April letter to Ch. Baude); "may my rheumatism take flight and depart with the coming attack

of the sun! When it is hot here, it is still quite bearable. Apart from these calculations about the heat and these health experiences, I am happy, even excited, by all that I have seen; and yet I have only seen what any bagman might see who is busy about the selling of his goods; but it has been enough to give me great delight. What remains of the old Arab town is marvellous; one holds one's breath when, at a sudden turn, the vision reappears. For those unhappy eyes that only see the colours on the palette, it is white; but picture to yourself a long hill, rather high, with a depression in the middle, and sloping as if to the sea, and this hill all covered with elongated or elevated cubes of which one cannot distinguish the thickness; all this remaining unnoticed by the eye that is ravished by the delicate tone, rosy, greenish, pale blue, making altogether white tinted with salmon.

"If one did not know it beforehand, one would never dream that amongst these cubes of plaster thousands of men are walking, talking, sleeping—men of noble manner, proud and calm, and with something very like indifference or contempt for us. And they are right. They are beautiful, we are ugly. What matter is it to me that they are knaves! They are beautiful! . . .

"Yesterday I went to take a bath. I had to go three or four hundred steps through streets full of merchants. In a passage a Jew was selling silks, pearls and corals; in front of his shop, not two yards wide, were three Arabs—an old man, another of middle age, the third about seventeen. There they were, seated, attentive, calm, wishing to buy, consulting together, making scarcely a gesture with their hands, always kept at full length, but sitting quietly, never hurrying, reflecting enormously, and keeping all the while under their burnouses the softest, gentlest attitudes. The youngest was superb—so handsome that mama was struck with it. 'They are like beautiful statues,' said she. I could not understand the scene and the relations that united these three Arabs. It was clear they were come to buy; they had come down from the higher part of the town. They were poor, for the youngest was in rags, and the burnouses of the others, though not in rags, were very much worn; but they took such pains in counting the little pieces of false coral that it was clear the Jew was selling dear to these big children a thing of no value. The one of middle age was counting on the table, with his flat hand by groups of five, the little pieces of coral which he

chose as he counted them; thus adding each time five pieces to the heap that he drew towards him.

"What strikes one is this simple colouring, these magnificent folds, and then this serious childishness.

"I was not able to wait till the end of the scene. It was cold and draughty in this passage, which brought me back to the fact of my poor crazy legs. I long for the time when I shall be a man again; what lovely things I shall see, and perhaps I shall do!"

April 23rd (to the same): "Now I take myself by the ear and drag myself to the letter-paper, and all the needful things. Nothing is wanting, neither the thousand things I have to say, nor above all the tender affection that I keep in store for you.

"Emile says that you are coming, and soon: don't be alarmed, you will not melt in the hot sun. There are cool places in the garden, where one can stretch oneself, with a magnificent landscape at one's feet. We have only had the heat since yesterday; you will see how good you will find it, your muscles will relax, and you will go back quite young. We will make some excursions together if I am up to it. Any way there are plenty all round us to tempt you to make some.

"You have heard from Emile that I went to Blidah. I bore the little journey very well at first, but I was tired afterwards. I am going to begin to rest, and go slowly, in order that I may go farther. I have scarcely done anything till now, for I don't feel myself up to remaining long in the same position, as a painter must, who thinks only of his work."

The health that he hoped for, and so anxiously waited for, did not come. On the contrary, as the heat increased, Jules felt more unwell and more fatigued. The last letter that he wrote to me reached me at Granada, in that hotel, the "Siete Suelos," where Fortuny and Henri Regnault had lived. There was all through it a sentiment of touching melancholy and discouragement.

"My good friends, this is delightful. It is too good to get your photographs at the same time as your kind and affectionate letter. I am glad you are going to Spain. Lucky fellows! Go along! while I, who should so like to see a bull fight! . . . You had not time to come, and indeed it was selfish to ask you. You could not have stayed more than a few days. But that is to be done some day when I am no longer a cripple, and when we can have two months before us. We are comfortably settled here. At this

moment I am writing to you under the tent set up in the terraced court of our villa, with a wonderful view before me. Placed a little to the left of a semicircle, formed by the hills of Mustapha, 170 yards above the sea which flows at their base, we have at every hour of the day, a different landscape; for the sides of the hills are full of ravines, and the sun, according to the time of day, throws their slopes into light, or makes a network of shade, in a way quite peculiar to this corner of Africa. Little villas gleaming in the sunshine or grey in the shade give effect to the groups of verdure, the whole looking from the distance like a rich embroidery, with bosses of green harmoniously arranged. All this runs down toward the Gulf of Algiers, and trending away from here forms Cape Matifou. Above are the crests of the Little Atlas, far away, and lost in heaven's blue; near by, sloping gardens spread out their golden or silvery verdure, according as one looks upon olive or eucalyptus. Add to this the perfume of the orange and lemon trees, the pleasure of telling you that I embrace you all three, Tristan included, that I am a little better, and you will have the state of my heart.

"Enjoy yourselves,—and you, my dear forester,

with your Toledo eyes, what are you going to give to the world after all this delight of sunshine and kindly fellowship and the loving union of the charming trio that you make? It seems to me I have the heart and voice to make a fourth—what say you? Ah! that shall be after the rheumatism! Kindest regards from mama and from me. A last embrace to all three of you."

The improvement he had experienced on arriving in Algiers ceased about the end of April. His strength and appetite gradually failed; and at the end of May it was decided to take the invalid back to France. He settled again in the Rue Legendre with the poor little mother, who never left him afterwards. When I saw him again I was shocked at the progress the disease had made. His thinness was such that my unhappy friend was nowhere in the garments that were made for his journey. His legs refused their service; he could no longer work; and yet he kept a little hope. He had just begun a new treatment, and talked of going into Brittany "as soon as he was strong enough." He drove every day in the Bois when the weather was fine, and spent the rest of his day on cushions in the corner of the studio, occupied in contemplating, with a heartrending look, his

studies hanging on the walls. This inaction was most distressing to him.

"Ah!" cried he, "if I was told: They are going to cut off your two legs, but after that you will be able to paint again, I would willingly make the sacrifice. . . ."

He could only sleep now with the help of injected morphine, and he waited with impatience for the hour when a new supply should give him some relief, and a factitious drowsiness should make him forget his suffering.

In proportion as digestion became more difficult his appetite became more capricious. He wanted to have dishes made which reminded him of the cooking of his village; then, when they were brought to him, he turned away disgusted, without tasting them. "No," said he, pushing aside the plate, "that's not it; to have it good it must be made down there, prepared by the Damvillers people, with home-grown vegetables." And while he was speaking one saw by his moist eyes a sudden and painful calling up of the impressions of former days; he saw all at once the old home, the gardens and orchards of Damvillers at the fall of evening, the peaceful village interiors at the time when the fires were lighted for the evening meal.

As the season advanced his strength decreased. In September his brother was obliged to take him on his back to carry him to the carriage, and he drove about slowly for an hour in the avenues of the Bois. He could not read, and was easily wearied by conversation. His nerves were become very irritable, and the slightest odours were disagreeable to his sense of smell. His courage seemed to forsake him; at the same time he was always wanting to know what others thought of his illness. His blue eyes with their penetrating look anxiously searched the eyes of his friends, and of his mother, who never left his side. The heroic little woman did her best to dissimulate, and was always smiling and affecting a cheerfulness and a confidence which were painful to see; then, when she could escape for a moment, she hastened into the neighbouring room and melted into tears.

For months this cruel agony was thus prolonged. Bastien was only a shadow of himself. On the 9th of December, during great part of the night, he talked of Damvillers with his mother and his brother. Then at about four in the morning he said to them, with a kiss, "Come, it is time for children to sleep." All three slept. Two hours later Mme. B. was

awakened by Jules, who asked for something to drink; she rose, and brought him a cup of tea, and was alarmed on finding that the invalid groped for the cup to guide it to his lips; he could no longer see; but he still spoke and even joked about the difficulty he had in moving his limbs.

Shortly afterwards he dozed, and sliding gently from sleep into death, he expired at six in the evening, December 10, 1884.

I saw him next day lying on his mortuary bed, in the midst of a thick covering of flowers. His poor emaciated face, with its sightless and deeply sunk orbits, made him look like one of those Spanish figures of Christ, fiercely cut in wood by Montanez.

On the 12th of December a long train of friends and admirers accompanied his remains to the Eastern Railway Station, whence it was conveyed to the Meuse. The next day, Sunday, the whole population of Damvillers waited at the entrance of the town for the funeral carriage, which brought back Bastien-Lepage to his native place.

The sad procession advanced slowly on that road from Verdun where the painter had loved to walk at twilight, talking with his friends. A pale mist blotted out those hills and woods whose familiar

outlines he had so often reproduced. The *cortège* stopped before the little church where he had intended painting his Burial of a Young Girl. The morning was showery; the wreaths and festoons of flowers, placed the night before on his coffin, were revived and refreshed by the moisture; when they were heaped up upon the grave they seemed to come to life again, and to send out with their renewed perfume a last adieu from Paris to the painter of the peasants of the Meuse.

VI.

ON the 17th of the following March, at the Hôtel de Chimay, now connected with the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the exhibition of the works of him whom we have surnamed the "Primitif" was opened. All the works of Bastien, with the exception of the Jeanne d'Arc, were collected there.

On visiting this exhibition the most prejudiced minds were struck with the suppleness, the fecundity, and power of the talent of this painter, carried off at the age of thirty-six. For the first time his varied and original work could be judged as a whole.

One could study in detail these productions of a thoroughly conscientious artist, and follow the growth of each composition as one follows the development of a beautiful plant—first in the drawings, so pure, so sober, and expressive; then in the sketches so truthful and sincere; and, lastly, in the finished pictures, so harmonious and luminous. By

the side of the great pictures, Les Foins (The Hay), La Saison d'Octobre (October), Le Mendiant (The Beggar), Père Jacques (Father Jacques), and L'Amour au Village (Love in the Village), like windows opening upon life itself, one admired that collection of small portraits in which the most penetrating physiological observation was united with an execution most masterly, precise, and delicate. One passed delighted from those interiors worthy of the Dutch painters, such as La Forge and La Lessive, to the landscapes breathing the odours of the fields and of the woods, such as Le Vieux Gueux (The Old Beggar), Les Vendanges (The Vintage), La Prairie (The Meadow), La Mare (The Pool), Les Blés Mûrs (Ripe Corn), or to those full of air and motion, like London Bridge and the Thames; then one stopped before La Petite fille allant à la Ecole (The Little Girl going to School), or that poetic Idyl, Le Soir au Village (Evening in the Village).

In this exhibition containing more than two hundred canvases and a hundred drawings, there was nothing trifling, nothing indifferent. The smallest sketches were interesting because they revealed passionate worship of what is simple and natural, hatred



The Inn.

By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

of the almost and the conventional, and the incessant striving of the artist after his ideal, which is Truth.

A healthy and robust poetry exhaled from this collection. One left the Hôtel de Chimay with a sensation of strengthening and reviving pleasure, such as one gets from certain aspects of nature—deep woods, limpid waters, and the bright sky of a summer morning.

Unhappily this joy was mixed with the sad thought of the sudden death of the young man who had produced all this masterly work.

On first entering these rooms reserved for his pictures I was, for a long time, impressed with a feeling that I had already experienced at the exhibition of the works of the talented young artist, Mdlle. Bashkirtseff, mown down like Bastien, in full youth, and at the same time as he. This cruel death seemed only a bad dream.

On seeing again these unfinished sketches, these perfect portraits, these canvases that I had seen him paint one after another, I felt as if I was conversing with the painter and the friend who had created all this. I felt that he was still living and in possession of all his force. I expected every moment to see him appear among us, smiling, happy, fortified by the now

unanimous admiration of the crowd gathered before his work.

Alas! instead of himself my eyes only met his portrait, placed in the first room, and the mournful eloquence of the wreaths and flowers attached to the frame recalled me harshly to the heartrending reality.

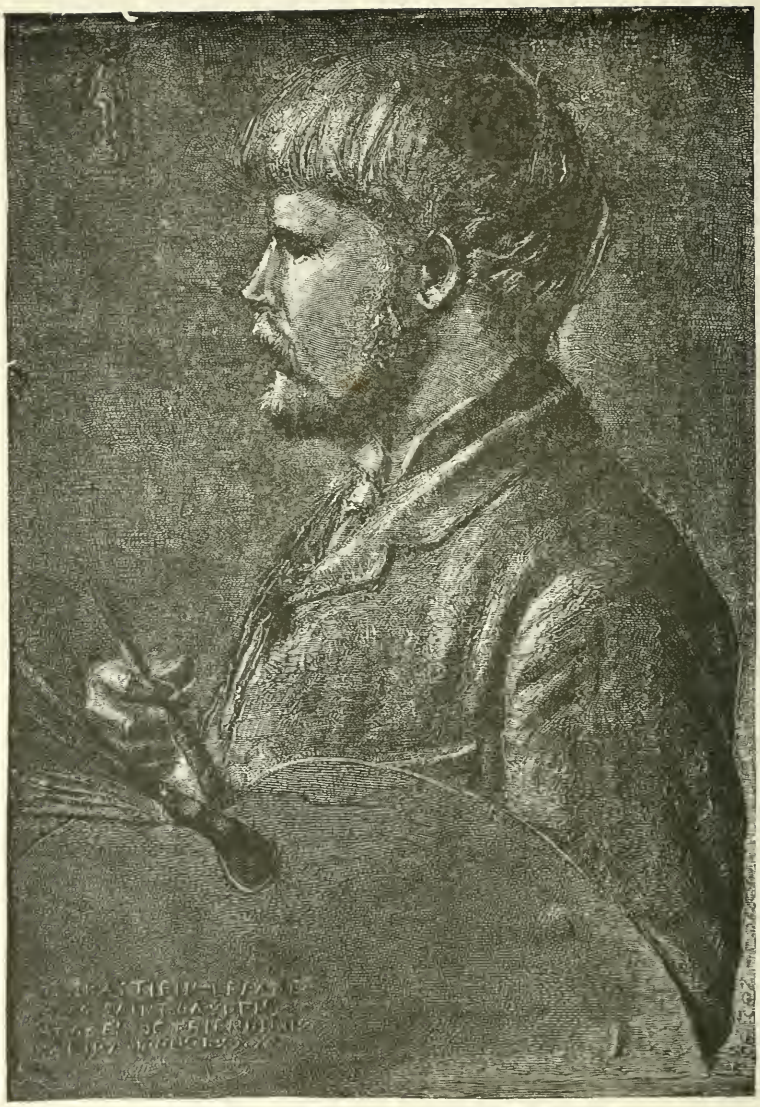
The poor "Primitif" will paint no more. The atelier at Damvillers where we have spent such happy hours is closed for ever. The peasants of the village will no more meet their countryman on the roads where he used to work in the open air. The rustic flowers that he used to paint in the foreground of his pictures, the blue chicory and the groundsel, will flower again this summer by the edges of the fields, but he will not be there to study and admire them.

Among the sketches exhibited by the side of the great pictures there was one that I had already remarked at Damvillers, and that I now saw again with deep emotion. It represents an old peasant woman going in the early morning into her garden to visit her apple tree in blossom. The nights of April are perfidious, and the spring frosts give mortal wounds; the old woman draws to her a flowering branch and inspects with anxious eye the disasters caused by the hurtful rays of the red moon. Bastien-

Lepage was like this tree, full of sap and of promising blossom. For years the heavens had been clement to him, and the flowers had given many and rich fruits; then in a single night a murderous frost destroyed all—the open flowers by thousands, and the tree itself. All that remains is the splendid fruit of past seasons, but the exquisite flavour of that the world will long enjoy.

Things truly beautiful have wonderful vitality and last on through the centuries, hovering above the earth where the generations of men go turn by turn to sleep,—and this survival of the works of the spirit of man is perhaps the surest immortality upon which he can count.

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE AS ARTIST.



Bas-Relief Portrait of Bastien-Lepage.

By Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE AS ARTIST.

THE work of Bastien-Lepage ranks, to my mind, with the very best in modern art. He brought to us what was in some ways a new view of nature—one whose truth was at once admitted, but which was nevertheless the cause of much discussion and criticism. It was objected to mainly, I think, as not being in accord with established rules, but nevertheless the objectors expressed their admiration for the skill of the painter; while, on the other hand, for those who accepted him (chiefly the younger men these), no praise was too great, no admiration too enthusiastic.

It is only a few years since his untimely death was mourned as a loss to the whole art-world, for his whole career is so recent that his fellow-students are still young men, many of them only now beginning to obtain full recognition; and yet it is perhaps long enough ago to enable his work to be considered as a whole, and his place in the art-movement to be

seen. For although he was an innovator, and one showing in all he did a strong individuality, the general direction of his genius was given him by the artistic tendencies of his time.

It will be generally admitted that if painting has made any advance in our day, if it shows in any direction a new departure, or fresh revelation of the beauty that exists throughout nature, it is in the development of the problems which have arisen from the study of landscape and of the effects of light. There now prevails a close and sincere study of nature, founded on the acceptance of things as they are, and an increasing consciousness on the part of artists (or perhaps it would be more correct to say an increasing courage on the part of artists to express their conviction) that a picture should be the record of something seen, of some impression felt, rather than be formally constructed. And men have awakened at length to see that all nature is beautiful, that all light is beautiful, and that there is colour everywhere; that the endeavour to realize truly the natural relation of people to their surroundings is better than to follow unquestioning on the old conventional lines. This is, roughly speaking, the modern standpoint, and it cannot be denied that

it is an enormous advance on the accepted artistic ideals of thirty or forty years ago. And to the men who have brought this about—to the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood; to Millet, Corot, Rousseau, Courbet, Manet, and Mr. Whistler—to all those who have fought the battle and to whom our present clearer outlook is due, we owe a lasting debt of gratitude.

It is a little surprising now, that the work of Bastien-Lepage, based as it is on the simple acceptance of nature, should have caused so much discussion on its first appearance. For time has justified him; we feel on comparing his work with other men of his time that it marks a new departure, and we realize that it has helped to form our present standpoint. But as the majority of people tune their eyes by pictures and not by nature, and only admire in nature that which is made manifest to them by their artistic prophet, it may be taken as a compliment to a man of independent genius that when he discloses a fresh view of nature, it is not for some time accepted. "Good gracious, sir!" said an eminent critic, referring to Claude Monet, "like nature? Yes; of course it's like nature; but a man has no business to choose that aspect of it!"

Every picture may be said to appeal to the spectator from two sides or points of view—the literary and the æsthetic.

A picture may tell its story to perfection—may point a moral and all the rest of it, and so fulfil the purpose of its author—and still, or, as some extreme persons would say, therefore—may be bad art, may indeed be not worthy to rank as art at all. Such pictures are frequently seen. And again, a picture may, by raising and defining to some inner sense emotions dimly felt by us before nature, leave us with a fuller sense of beauty, a feeling of something revealed to us. And yet it need have no subject or story. We are convinced that this picture is beautiful: that no other form of artistic expression can precisely so touch us. Such pictures are rare, but happily they do exist. Yet, from the nature of things, it is impossible but that such a picture should speak to some—ever so slight—extent to the mind; and also the most literary picture is never without evidence of some desire to please the eye.

The work of Bastien-Lepage seems to me to embrace both these points of view. The literary and æsthetic sides of art were very evenly balanced in him. If we take any individual work, as, for example, the

Beggar, we find a most perfect realization of character: the whole life-history of the man seen and brought before us—evidently this was the motive of the picture; yet the painting is in itself so full of charm, the perception of colour so fine, that we feel he was equally interested in that. He tried to hold the balance even. His work shows an extraordinary receptive power, an unequalled (almost microscopic on occasion) clearness of vision, allied with an absolute mastery of his material. His attitude towards nature is one of studied impartiality, and seems to show the resolute striving of an intensely sympathetic nature to get at the actual optical appearances and to suppress any hint of his own feelings. And his subjects are presented with such force and skill that their truth to nature is at once felt, and if a painter, you cannot fail also to feel the charm of his simple and sincere method. You cannot tally it by any other painter's work: it stands by itself.

His impartial attitude towards his model constitutes one of Bastien-Lepage's distinctions. I am not sure that it is not the distinct note of all his work. He paints a man—and the man stands before you, and you ask yourself, "What is he going to say? What does the artist wish to express?" You may

make what you can of him ; Lepage gives you no clue. To me, I confess, this quality is a very high one ; it seems to indicate a great gift, and to be, if I may presume to say so, akin to Shakespeare's method of presenting his characters without a hint of his own feelings towards them.

Although it is no doubt owing to Millet that Lepage's eyes were opened to the paintableness of country life, he saw his subjects in his own way and approached them from his own point of view. With Millet the subject and type were everything—the individual nothing. He was passionately moved by his subject, and once its action and sentiment were expressed, everything was subordinated to them. He cared nothing for the smaller truths of detail provided the general impression were true to his mental image, and his aim was avowedly to impose his mental impression on the spectator. Lepage, on the contrary, appears to avoid communicating his mental impression. He will give you the visual impression, as truly as he possibly can ; you may, if you please, find—as he has found—pathos and poetry in it : as before the same scene in nature, if you have sympathy ; but for his part he will not help you by any comment of his own.

And whereas with Millet the interest always centres in the subject, in Lepage it centres in the individual. His pictures become portraits. He chooses a good type, and sets himself to paint him at his work and amid his natural surroundings, and, somehow or other, the subject, as motive and reason for the picture, takes a subordinate place. And yet this is not because anything belonging to the subject is slurred, but because the attention is taken beyond the subject to the actors in it. For his figures not only live; they convince us of their identity as individuals, and gradually we get so interested in them that we begin to forget what they are doing, and almost to wonder why they are there. We are, in fact, brought so close to them that we cannot get away from the sense of their presence. It is no small tribute to Lepage's skill that his people do so interest us; but is not this interest a conflicting element in the picture? Is it to the advantage of the picture that the interest should be so equally divided? I cannot tell: when before a picture of Lepage's I accept it in everything—on thinking it over, I begin to doubt. There is no room for doubt about Millet; no mistake about what he meant. With him the attention is always concentrated on the business in hand: and

without desiring to qualify the great respect and admiration which I have for Lepage's work, it seems to me that the point of view of Millet included more essential truths (or perhaps excluded those which were not essential to the expression of the subject); and that for this reason Lepage's most successful pictures depend least upon the interest of subject, and most upon the interest of portraiture.

For it is in his portraits that the great capacity of the man is best seen; and they are altogether admirable. His people stand before you, and you feel that they must be true to the very life. He loves to place them in an even, open, light, and simply accepting the ordinary conditions of his sitters, produces a surprisingly original result. There is no forcing of effect, no slurring of detail—everything is searched out relentlessly, lovingly. There is the same impartial standpoint—the same apparent determination to keep himself out of the picture. From the artist's point of view they are altogether delightful; modelled with the thoroughness of a sculptor, the colour and atmosphere are always true, and the execution is unlaboured and direct. It would be difficult to point to any modern portraits which surpass for technical mastery and charm such works as the "First Communion,"

the portraits of his parents, his grandfather, of M. Theuriet, Albert Woolf, Sarah Bernhardt, "Pas Meche," and the Beggar. Each of these is a complete picture, as well as being a portrait. The elaborate dress of the actress, the cheap muslin and ill-fitting gloves of the child, in the "First Communion"—all the matters of minor detail are dwelt on with, in each case, the fullest sense of their literary importance to the picture, and yet the painting of these things, as of all else, is so delightful in itself that the artist desires no other reason.

While landscape entered as a matter of course into his rustic pictures, it was always subordinate to the figures; although he carried the finish of the foregrounds in these pictures to the farthest possible point, delighting to express the beauty of everything —weeds, sticks, stones, the clods of earth—all was felt, and shown to be beautiful. But he painted also some admirable landscapes: of these I have seen but few, and the recollection of one in particular remains with me as one of the most beautiful things I have seen. It is a field of ripe golden corn; beyond are the distant fields and low hills, and overhead in the clear blue sky a few clouds. The corn is swaying and rustling in the breeze, and small birds are flitting

about. The whole scene is bathed in daylight and fresh air: with no great stretch of fancy one can see the corn moving, and hear the singing of the birds. One is filled with a sense of the sweetness of nature and the beauty of the open fields. And the picture is so simple—no effort in design, no artifice apparent—it impresses as a pure piece of nature.

This love of nature and resolute determination not to depart from the strict literal truth as he saw it, marks all the work of Bastien-Lepage. As far as it was possible for an artist nowadays, he appears to have been uninfluenced by the old masters. The only lesson he seems to have learnt from them was that nature, which sufficed for them, should suffice for him also. It is this attitude of mind which brings him into kinship with the early painters, and which led to his being styled "the primitive." He did not set out to form his art on the methods of the older painters, but going as they did, direct to nature, he resolutely put on one side (as far as was possible to one familiar with them) the accepted pictorial artifices. He seems to have set himself the task of going over the ground from the beginning; and the fact that his uncompromising and unconventional presentment of his subjects should be expressed by means of a most

highly accomplished, very modern, and very elegant technique, was one of the things which, while it greatly charmed, at the same time puzzled and surprised people. It was so different from what had been seen, or might reasonably have been expected; and one can understand some critics feeling that a man so thoroughly master of his art, so consummate a painter, must be wilfully affected in the treatment of his subjects, his simple acceptance of nature appearing to them as a pose. But it was not long before he was understood; and one has only to read the very interesting memoir of M. Theuriet to see how mistaken this view was, and how simply and naturally his art developed from his early life and associations. It is seldom indeed that one finds an artist so completely adjusted to his surroundings—so much so that he is able to go back for his mature inspiration not only to his first impressions, but to the very scenes and, in some cases no doubt, the individuals who awakened them. As a rule an artist nowadays is led in many directions before he finds himself. Bastien-Lepage had his doubts and hesitations, of course, but they were soon over, and almost from the start he seems to have decided on his path.

The advantage of this to him in his work must have been enormous, as any one who has painted in the country will know; for villages contain no surplus population—every one has his work to do; and the peasant is slow to understand, and distrustful of all that lies outside his own experience: so that it is difficult, and in many cases impossible, for an artist to get models in a village. But one can imagine Lepage to have been friends with all his models, and that his pictures excited as lively an interest (though, of course, on different grounds) in Damvillers as in Paris; and it was, I think, due to some extent to this, as well as to his own untiring energy, that he was enabled to complete so much. As far as I am aware, he was unique among contemporary artists in being so happily circumstanced; and it is evidence of the simple sincerity of the man that he found his ideal in the ordinary realities of his own experience: feeling, no doubt, that beauty exists everywhere waiting for him who has eyes to see.

It has been frequently said of Bastien-Lepage that he had no feeling for beauty—or, at any rate, that he was indifferent to it; but as it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory definition of beauty, this

point cannot be discussed. Taking the word, however, in its obvious and generally accepted meaning, that of personal beauty, it seems to me that there is no fair ground for the charge; for such works as the "First Communion," the portrait of Sarah Bernhardt, and "Joan of Arc," all show a most refined and delicate appreciation of personal beauty, and should surely have led his critics to consider whether the man who painted them had not very good reasons for painting people who were not beautiful, too. For all work cannot be judged from one point of view; we recognize that a work of art is the outcome of a personal impression, and that the artist's aim is to give expression to his views; and the deeper his insight into nature, the greater the result. And yet, curiously enough, the fact that Bastien-Lepage's insight into nature was exceptionally deep and wide renders it difficult to form a clear judgment, as his work appeals equally from different points of view. His love of beauty, for instance, seems to go hand-in-hand with a psychological, or even pathological interest: and this equal prominence of different tendencies is a very puzzling element in his work. We expect an artist to give us a strongly personal view; but here is one who gives us something very like an

analysis, and whose personal view it is impossible to define—and the premature ending of his career leaves it now for ever doubtful which was the strongest bias of his mind. It seems to me that his sympathies were so wide as to try and include everything, and that he has helped to widen the bounds of beauty, by showing its limitless possibilities. The words of Blake, "To see a world in a grain of sand, and heaven in a wild flower," suggest, I think, his general feeling towards nature.

In spite of the wide range of his work and the extraordinary versatility of his execution, he kept, as a rule, within certain limitations of treatment. He did not care for the strong opposition of light and shadow, and he seems almost to have avoided those aspects of nature which depend for their beauty on the changes and contrasts of atmosphere and light. All that side of nature which depends on memory for its realization was left almost untouched by him, and yet it is idle to suppose that so richly gifted a man could not have been keenly sensible to all nature's beauty; but I think he found himself hedged in by the conditions necessary to the realization of the qualities he sought. For in painting a large figure-picture in the open air, the painter must almost

of necessity limit himself to the effect of grey open daylight. This he realized splendidly: at the same time it may be said that he sought elaboration of detail perhaps at the expense of effect, approaching nature at times too much from the point of view of still-life. This is not felt in his small pictures, in which the point of view is so close that the detail and general effect can be seen at the same time; but in his large works much that is charming in the highest degree when examined in detail, fails to carry its full value to the eye at a distance necessary to take in the whole work. This was the case with "Joan of Arc" in the Paris Exhibition of two years ago; and it was instructive to compare this picture with Courbet's "Stone-breakers," which hung near it on the same wall. Courbet had generalized as much as possible—everything was cleared away but the essentials; and at a little distance Courbet showed in full power and completeness, while the delicate and beautiful work in "Joan of Arc" was lost, and the picture flat and unintelligible in comparison. No doubt Bastien-Lepage worked for truth of impression and of detail too, but it is apparently impossible to get both; and this seems to show that the building-up or combining a number of facts, each of which may be true of itself

and to the others, does not in its sum total give the general impression of truth. It is but a number of isolated truths. Bastien-Lepage has carried his endeavour in this direction farther than any of his predecessors—in fact it may be said that he has carried literal representation to its extreme limit: so much so as to leave clearly discernible to us the question which was doubtless before him, but which has at any rate developed itself from his work, whether it is possible to attain literal truth without leaving on one side much of that which is most beautiful in nature? And further, the question arises, whether literal truth is the highest truth. For realism, as an end in art, leads nowhere; it is an *impasse*. Surely it is but the means to whatever the artist has it in him to express.

I feel convinced that realism was not the end with Bastien-Lepage. I believe that his contribution to art, great as it was, and covering as it does an amount of work which might well represent a whole life's work instead of the work of a few short years, was but the promise of his full power, and that, had he lived, his work would have shown a wider range of nature than that of any other artist, except perhaps Rembrandt. But it was not to be.

He gave his best, and the world is richer for his work; his name will not die.

"Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave."

GEORGE CLAUSEN.

MODERN REALISM IN PAINTING.



THE LITTLE SWEEP.

By Jules Bastien-Lepage.

MODERN REALISM IN PAINTING.

MUCH has been written about Jean François Millet, and mostly from two points of view. The picturesque surroundings of the plain of Barbizon and the peasant's blouse have tempted the sentimental biographer to dwell on the personal note of poverty, which we now know was not the dominant one in Millet's life. The picturesque writer has amplified, with more or less intelligence, reflections suggested by the subjects of his pictures. In all this, the painter's point of view, which is, after all, the only one that matters, has, so far as its expression in print is concerned, been overlooked and omitted.

The important fact about Millet is not that he struggled with poverty, or that he expressed on canvas the dignity of labour, but that he was a great artist. As corollaries, he was a great draughtsman and a great colourist. He was gifted with the comprehension in

its entirety of the import of any scene in nature which he wished to render. An unerring analysis enabled him to select what were the vital constituents of such a scene, and exquisite perceptions, trained by incessant labour, to render them in fitting terms in accordance with the tradition which governs the use of each material.

It may seem that the process here summarized is after all only that which governs all art production, and that the work of the second-rate and the ordinary differs only from that of the master in the degree of capacity exercised. But this is not so. It differs totally in kind. The conception, conscious or unconscious, of the nature and aim of art is in the two cases different, and, as a consequence, the practice is different.

It would be affectation to ignore that, for good or for evil, Paris is the art-centre of European painting, and that the most serious training in drawing and painting that is procurable on European lines is procurable in Paris. I should therefore consider it a service of great utility to serious art if it were possible to make clear the reasons for my conviction that the tendency of the mass of exhibition painting in France, and, by reflection, in England, has been in an inartistic direction,

and has led inevitably to the sterile ideal of the instantaneous camera. And, on the other hand, that the narrow stream of purely artistic painting, that has trickled its more sequestered course parallel with the broad flood of exhibition work, owes its vitality to a profound and convinced reverence for tradition. For the illustration of that tradition I can find no more convenient source than the work of Jean François Millet, and for a typical monument of its disregard, the more fair to cite in that it is respectable in achievement, the work of Bastien-Lepage affords me a timely and perhaps the most appropriate example possible.

What, then, is the main difference? How did Millet work, and with what objects? How did Lepage work, and what is it he strove to attain?

To begin with, Millet, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, had seen his picture happen somewhere in nature. Its treatment generally involved complex difficulties of suggestion of movement, or at least of energy, to say nothing of those created by the variety of lighting and atmospheric effect; the management of sunlight, of twilight, of the lighting of interiors. All these elements he was enabled, by means of a highly-trained artistic memory, to retain and render in

the summary method which we call inspiration, and which has nothing in common with the piecemeal and futile copying of nature of a later school. Dealing with materials in their essential nature living and fleeting, his execution was in the main separated from his observation. His observation was thus uninterrupted by the exigencies of execution, and his execution untrammelled by the fortuitous inconveniences incident on the moment of observation, and undisturbed, moreover, by the kaleidoscopic shifting of the pictorial elements which bewilder and mislead the mere *plein-airiste*. He did not say to the woman at the washtub, "Do as if you were washing, and stay like that for me for four or five hours a day, while I paint a picture from you." Or to the reaper, "Stay like that with the scythe drawn back, pretending to reap." "*La nature ne pose pas*"—to quote his own words. He knew that if figures in movement were to be painted so as to be convincing, it must be by a process of cumulative observation. This truth one of the greatest heirs of the great school of 1830 has not been slow to understand, and it is to its further and more exquisite development that we owe the profoundly learned and beautiful work of Degas. His field of observation is shifted from the life of the village and

the labour of the plains, to the sordid toil of the green-room and the hectic mysteries of stage illumination; but the artistic problem remains the same, and its solution is worked out on the same lines.

Millet observed and observed again, making little in the way of studies on the spot, a note sometimes of movement on a cigarette-paper. And when he held his picture he knew it, and the execution was the singing of a song learned by heart, and not the painful performance in public of a meritorious feat of sight-reading. The result of this was that his work has style—style which is at the same time in the best traditions and strictly personal. No one has been more imitated than Millet, and no one is more inimitable.

Holding in the hollow of his hand the secrets of light and life and movement, the secrets of form and colour, learnt from the visible world, he was equipped, like the great masters of old, for the treatment of purely fanciful themes; and, when he painted a reluctant nymph being dragged through the woods by a turbulent crowd of cupids, he was as much at home as when he rendered the recurring monotone of the peasant's daily labours. My quarrel with the gentlemen who escape from the laws of anatomy and perspective

by painting full-length portraits of souls, and family groups of abstractions, is, not that they paint these things, but that they have not first learnt something about the laws which govern the incidence of light on concrete bodies. It might be well if they would discover whether they can paint their brother, whom they have seen, before they elect to flounder perennially in Olympus.

Let it also be noted here that the work of Jean François Millet was, with scarcely an exception, free from a preoccupation with the walls of an exhibition. The scale of his pictures and their key were dictated by the artistic requirements of the subject, and not by the necessities or allurements of what I may call for brevity, competitive painting. It was never a question with him of the preparation within twelve months of an annual poster, which was to occupy so much line-space, and send the betting on him up or down as the case might be.

What, on the other hand, were the essential ideas of Bastien-Lepage's work? To begin with, he was a painter of exhibition pictures, of what are called in Paris *machins*. He was an inveterate *salonnier*, with the ideals and the limitations of the typical uncultured Paris art-student, the *fort* of his *atelier*. *Faire*

vrai is the sum and aim of his intention. Realists he and his like have been jauntily labelled by the hasty journalist. But the truth in their work is truth of unessentials, and their elaborate and unlovely realities serve only to cover themes that are profoundly unreal.

To begin with, it was thought to be meritorious, and conducive of truth, and in every way manly and estimable, for the painter to take a large canvas out into the fields and to execute his final picture in hourly *tête-à-tête* with nature. This practice at once restricts the limits of your possible choice of subject. The sun moves too quickly. You find that grey weather is more possible, and end by never working in any other. Grouping with any approach to naturalness is found to be almost impossible. You find that you had better confine your compositions to a single figure. And with a little experience the photo-realist finds, if he be wise, that that single figure had better be in repose. Even then your picture necessarily becomes a portrait of a model posing by the hour. The illumination, instead of being that of a north light in Newman Street, is, it is true, the illumination of a Cornish or a Breton sky. Your subject is a real peasant in his own natural surroundings, and not a model

from Hatton Garden. But what is he doing? He is posing for a picture as best he can, and he looks it. That woman stooping to put potatoes into a sack will never rise again. The potatoes, portraits every one, will never drop into the sack, and never a breath of air circulates around that painful rendering in the flat of the authentic patches on the very gown of a real peasant. What are the truths you have gained, a handful of tiresome little facts, compared to the truths you have lost? To life and spirit, light and air?

The tacit assumption on which the theory and practice of the so-called realist rests, is that if photography, instead of yielding little proofs on paper in black and white, could yield large proofs on canvas in oils, the occupation of the painter would be gone. What a radical misconception of the nature and function of art this is, becomes evident when we paraphrase the same idea and apply it in the region of letters. Few would be found to defend the proposition that a stenographic report of events and words as they occurred would constitute the highest literary treatment of a given scene in life. A page of description is distinguished as literature from reporting when the resources of language are employed with cunning

and mastery to convey, not a catalogue of facts, but the result of the observation of these facts on an individual temperament. Its value depends on the degree of mastery with which the language is used, and on the delicacy and range of the writer's personality, and in no wise on the accuracy of the facts recorded.

Richter says somewhere that no artist can replace another, and not even the same artist himself, at different periods of his life. One characteristic of the work of the modern photo-realist in painting is that almost any one of them could have painted a portion of the work of any other without making any appreciable discord of execution apparent. They are all equipped from the first at the studios with a *technique* which serves them equally, once for all. It is known as *la bonne peinture*. It differs from style in being a thing you can acquire, and I believe it is even maintained, not only to be perfectible, but to have been, on several occasions, perfected.

Nothing is more frequently brought home to the student of modern painting than the truth that the work of the *salonnier*, the picture, that is, that is born of the exhibition and for the exhibition, wears its air of novelty and interest strictly for the season. If he

meet it again in a house, or in the holocaust of a retrospective exhibition, its date is stamped upon it with the accuracy of a page of *Le follet* or *Le moniteur de la mode*. And whether a picture be asserted at the date of its exhibition as advanced, or the contrary, as daring or dull, if it is born of the exhibition, it dies with the exhibition, and the brood to which it gives birth hold their life on the same tenure.

It was impossible, on seeing Bastien-Lepage's Joan of Arc at the Paris Exhibition of 1890, after a lapse of some years since its first appearance, to resist the conclusion that it falls inevitably under the heading of "*machin*." In the composition, or in what modern critics prefer to call the placing, there is neither grace nor strangeness. The drawing is without profundity or novelty of observation. The colour is uninteresting, and the execution is the usual mechanically obtrusive square-brush-work of the Parisian schools of art. Dramatically, the leading figure is not impressive or even lucid; and the helpless introduction of the visionary figures behind the back of the rapt maid completes the conviction that it was an error of judgment for a painter with the limitations of Lepage to burden a touching and sanctified legend with commonplace illustration. A

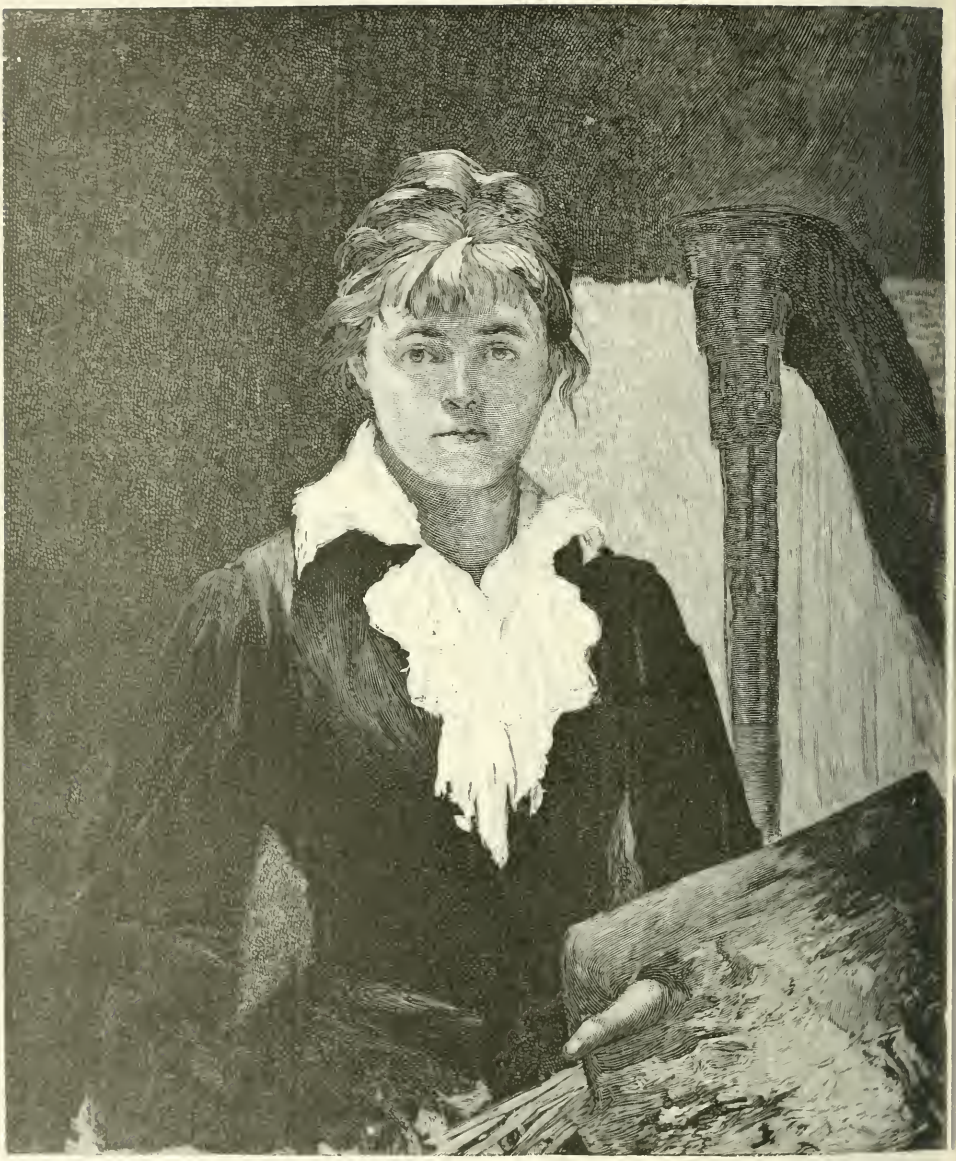
faithful copy of so strange and interesting a subject as Mme. Sarah Bernhardt cannot fail to be a valuable document, but Lepage's portrait has surely missed altogether the delicacy of the exquisitely spiritual profile. The *format* of the little panel portrait of the Prince of Wales evoked in the press the obviously invited reference to Clouet. The ready writer cannot have looked at so much as a single pearl in the necklace of one of Clouet's princesses.

To judge fairly of an artist, however, we must follow him on to his own ground. In his portrait of his grandfather, at the same exhibition, it was quite possible to see Lepage at his best as a workmanlike and photographic copyist of a figure in repose. It was at the same time possible to turn from this picture straight to Manet's *fifre*, and to his *bon bock*, and thus to measure the gulf that separates a meritorious workman from an inspired executant of the first rank. No useful end can be gained by obscuring this fact, and if, in league with the modern gigantic conspiracy of toleration, we are to speak of Bastien-Lepage as a master, what terms are left us for Keene and Millet, for Whistler and Degas ?

WALTER SICKERT.

Chelsea, 1891.

A STUDY OF MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF.



In Possession of her Mother.] [Engraved by C. State.

MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF.
(From a Portrait by Herself.)

A STUDY OF MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF.

THE brilliant sunshine of a glorious October morning poured through the tall windows of Marie Bashkirtseff's studio on my last visit to the Rue de Prony. This mellow light bathing her canvasses brought them out in fullest relief, and I had never had such a favourable opportunity of judging her work in its entirety. I was struck more than ever by the vigour and vitality of these studies, sketches, pastels, and pictures struck off at a white heat of mental production between the ages of seventeen and four and twenty. Hanging above the gallery which runs along one side of the wall were her first studies from life, which astonished Julian so much that he pronounced them phenomenal; here were her numerous sketches showing the sincerity of her efforts to be true to nature; and her finished pictures full of individuality and power.

As the eye rested on these portraits where the key-

note of character had been so unmistakably struck, on these bits of city life in their shabbier aspects, on these Paris street children with faces so prematurely sharpened or saddened, you became at once aware that this artist was a naturalist of the naturalists. Her chief object was to seize life—to seize the flying impression as she happened to see it; to render it with unflinching faithfulness to nature without any attempt at arrangement, composition, or beauty of treatment.

"Oh, to catch nature!" This is the cry of Marie Bashkirtseff, as it is the cry of Impressionism, as it was perhaps the cry of the primitive artist who with much labour and wrestling of the spirit modelled the first rude image of the lioness or painted the first likeness of an archer, bow in hand Not quite the same, perhaps. For these early workers in clay or pigments saw nature with the eyes of children—those visionary eyes to which the leaves of the trees, the flowers of the field, the dogs and horses and cats and cows are as much part of the interminable fairy-tale in which they live as the more fantastic figures in more orthodox stories. For these primitive artists looked at the world with the eyes of children, and

though they looked at her with clear, wide-open eyes, they could not help seeing her symbolically, seeing the analogy between men and beasts, between beasts and plants, between the articulate and inarticulate phases of nature, so that whatever they produced not only stood for itself but for a host of subtly apprehended affinities linked together by imaginative insight into the mystery of things. And in tracing the development of this primitive style of art a little further, in following it to its legitimate development into the loftiest forms of Greek art, we cannot help seeing that it was the consummate flower of this archaic symbolism. With this difference, that while Egyptian, Assyrian, and Indian artists invented the most grotesque and fantastic forms to express the wonder and mystery of the world, the Greeks tried to find outward expression for that archetype of beauty which has as yet only existed in the mind of man.

And nature, plus the mind of man, plus that master faculty which refuses and chooses, and which reaches its highest results by making fresh combinations from what is widely diffused in nature: that, surely, is the secret of art. This faculty of selection and concentration, within the limits of some more or less conventional form, seems to belong to every manifestation

of art, which can never under any circumstances be a simple reproduction of nature. How can it, indeed, since, as Blake so pithily puts it: "A fool sees not the same tree a wise man sees"? And we question whether any two people, any two painters would ever see precisely the same thing—the same tree, however hard they might try to free themselves from the bias of personality; or would succeed in giving us an identical pictorial representation of any subject whatsoever. For the artist's own mind, unlike a photographic apparatus, would always intervene so as to force him to see life through the medium of his temperament. Indeed, will not the circulation of the artist's blood, the pitch of his nerves, the thoughts he has thought and the emotions he has felt from the beginning of consciousness, have to be taken into account as factors in any individual painter's picture of a tree or any other object? For this reason a picture can never be truly likened to a window opening on nature unless, indeed, it be a stained-glass window. On the contrary, the artist for the time being lends us his eyes to see nature with. And as the eyes of a Titian or a Turner saw combinations and harmonies of tones and tints whose magnificent effect entirely escapes the eyes of ordinary mortals, it

is much wiser to accept their interpretation than to go into hair-splitting discussions as to the precise exactitude of their copy to a reality which is eternally changing.

Take only the painters of the realistic modern French school—can we not tell at a glance, in going through the Louvre, whether it is nature according to Corot, to Rousseau, or to Millet that we are looking at? For whether the realists like it or no, the world will reflect itself in their brains according to the laws of their peculiar individuality, and the preciousness of all art expression seems precisely to consist in this rare flavour which the artist's self impresses on nature outside himself. This priceless quality which we call style is as inseparable from the genuine artist as the shape of his nose. It clearly differentiates a peasant woman by Millet from any ordinary peasant woman we may chance on in a field, and is as marked in his simple pourtrayal of rustic subjects as in the most sublime compositions by Michael Angelo.

These few inadequate remarks may not be entirely out of place when speaking of the æsthetic views of our day; or of an artist who is peculiarly representative of them. For the new scientific spirit which has revolutionized our views of nature, has also penetrated

the realms of literature and art, and impelled artists to attempt a perfectly unprejudiced reproduction of life. For the present this has led them to a grim realism, which loves to dwell exclusively on the material side of existence, scouting the romantic and ideal as figments of man's fancy to be relegated into the limbo of unrealistics along with the dragons and griffins of the world's childhood. The same movement which has produced the extremely powerful but one-sided novels of De Goncourt, Zola, and Guy de Maupassant may also be studied in the works of the realistic French painters in their almost fierce insistence on what is natural even to the pitch of repulsiveness.

Impressionism was in the air when Marie Bashkirtseff entered on her artistic career in 1877. It would amount to a truism to give any fresh account of her birth, parentage, and early life at this time. All the world has read her famous journal. All the world knows that she was born at Poltava, in the south of Russia, in 1860. That her parents were separated after a few years of marriage; that her mother and aunt came to the West of Europe with the two children—Paul and Marie, and a cousin Dina; that they travelled about after the fashion of their

kind, afterwards settling down first at Nice, and later on in Paris. As Marie often bitterly laments, her education was carried on in a rather desultory fashion. But her faculty for acquiring knowledge was so surprising, her intellect so extraordinary, that she became an admirable linguist, a skilled musician, a splendid singer, a fair mathematician with a rapidity that seemed to amount to intuition. Her powers of observation had probably been much developed by all that she saw and heard on their travels. She had an early opportunity of seeing the master works of all time in Florence and Rome, and was an indefatigable frequenter of museums and picture galleries. At the age of fifteen, her judgment was already so independent that she had the audacity to speak of the "cardboard pictures of Raphael" and the "stupid if glorious Venuses of Titian." She had never as yet lived in Paris, mixed with artists, or heard the talk of the studios, yet in many respects she seems already a full-fledged art student, with the last phrase of the hour on her lips. Already she sought in pictures that scrupulous resemblance to nature which was her chief aim when she herself took to painting. But though deeply interested in art, it did not at that time occupy the chief place in her thoughts. Music attracted her

more, and the desire to be a singer was her greatest ambition. In fact, she laboured under the disadvantage of an *embarras de richesses* in regard to her natural gifts, and for several years she found it difficult to make a choice.

However, one day in October, 1877, there entered M. Julian's now famous life-school in the Passage des Panoramas two very tall ladies, all in black, accompanied by a young girl dressed in pure white from head to foot, as if she were a lily of the field. This strange and striking trio made quite a sensation. M. Julian himself, with his happy picturesqueness of phrase in describing the first appearance of Marie Bashkirtseff in his studio, spoke of her as *une blancheur*—something bright and startling, which seemed to have little in common with the severe work-a-day routine of studio life. Nevertheless, she had come, accompanied by her mother and aunt, to be entered as a pupil; and in the letter which she brought him from an eminent physician, he found this curt word by way of introduction: "I have sent you a monster."

All this was very unlike the usual order of things. But it was there and then settled that Marie Bashkirtseff was to attend his classes, and every morning found

her duly at place, working away as if her life depended upon it. At first, her master took this wish to paint for the caprice of a spoilt child, which would soon pass when confronted by the difficulties of execution. Before long, however, he recognized his mistake; he felt that she was a power; that there was something which lifted her out of the ranks and placed her apart among her fellow pupils. Something which gave to her first efforts, however crude and tentative, a vigour and spontaneity which were truly astonishing. And he discovered, too, that so far from playing at art she was in deadly earnest. Instead of being less regular in her attendance than the other art students, she flung herself into her work with the passionate zeal of an enthusiast. Morning, noon, and night found her either at her easel, or else taking private lessons in anatomy and modelling, or haunting sales and picture galleries—always on the alert to improve herself. Indeed, Julian found her a little monster of energy, of talent, of ambition, of concentrated will. Whatever she took into her head to do, she did and accomplished the seemingly impossible.

In a surprisingly short time she had mastered the elements of art, and her studies from the nude were considered wonderful by her masters. By the in-

tensity of her attention and fever of work joined to her native endowment she managed after only two years of study to produce a picture of a woman reading, which was hung in the Salon. It evinces all her characteristic qualities—masterly vigour of drawing, and a vivid and striking manner of painting human faces. Her extreme sensitiveness to impressions gave her a peculiar facility for catching likenesses and bringing out the salient and personal traits in her models.

After some few years devoted to painting in the studio, Marie Bashkirtseff began to feel very unhappy about her work as a colourist. It fell so far below her own standard as to plunge her into fits of despair. In the midst of this profound dissatisfaction, in the autumn of 1881, she went to Spain, and there she seemed to awaken to a new sense—for the first time to awaken to the full, glorious significance of colour in the painter's sense.

In reading those pages of her journal which describe the picturesque Moorish palaces, the gloomy Gothic cathedrals, the dark, crooked streets with their groups of gipsies and the treasures of art stored away in museums and churches, it seems as if they were illumined by a mellower light than the rest of the

book. Velasquez and Goya opened her eyes, and she "raised herself on tiptoe," as she says, to master the secret of their unique method. Day after day she steeped herself in those glowing canvasses, and on her return to Paris she began to reap the benefit of this enthusiastic absorption. Soon afterwards she painted The Umbrella, in which she made a great leap forward.

Her method and style of painting now placed her definitely in the same school to which Bastien-Lepage belonged, or of which he was the master. It was the school which said: "We will let the open air into our pictures. Let us paint light just as it is out of doors, not the artificial studio effects from north aspects and skylights." The *Plein Air* movement of the painters was precisely the same as that which Zola inaugurated in literature. It was nature taking the citadel of art by storm—at least, what these particular men and artists understood by nature.

At the head of this school stood Bastien-Lepage, the young painter who so early became what the French call *Chef d'École.* His pictures taken fresh from the country—his Haymakers, and Harvesters, and Potato Gatherers, and Rustic Lovers filled Marie Bashkirtseff with boundless delight. "He is not

only a painter," she says, "he is a poet, a psychologist, a metaphysician, a creator." His perfect imitation of nature, the quality which ranked highest in her judgment, was beyond all praise in her eyes.

Many of the French critics called her the pupil of Bastien. But she had of course never been his actual pupil, having been trained in quite a different school, and it always gave her much annoyance to be called so. But in spite of the striking contrast between the origin and early associations of these two young painters they were singularly alike in their love of realism, their early fame, and premature end.

Look, on the one hand, at Marie, this offspring of Tartar nobles, with savage instincts lying like half-tamed wild beasts in the background of her consciousness. She was descended from owners of lands and serfs, and the instinct of command, the pride of power, the love of all things splendid became part of her inheritance. She was the idol of two women, her "two mothers," who, in her master Julian's incisive phrase, "would have burned down Paris to please her, or had themselves cut into a thousand pieces to satisfy one of her caprices." Nature had endowed her with such lavish gifts that her very talents turned into a stumbling-block, threaten-

ing to divert her efforts into too many channels. Music, literature, sculpture, the stage, were successively the goal of her ambition; and each one of these arts was in her eyes only the means to an end—the one burning desire for fame. However, as the deep meaning of work, of the artist's simple and disinterested absorption in what he is fashioning, became familiar to her she began to forget herself more and more in the things she did. Her devotion to art, her love and delight in it, grew steadily with her increasing mastery over its technical difficulties. She says truly: "Outside of my art, which I commenced from caprice and ambition, which I continued out of vanity, and which I now worship; outside of this passion—for it is a passion—there is nothing."

Little by little—with many outcries, it is true, and kickings against the traces—Marie Bashkirtseff had begun to discover that there is no royal road to art. That to him only is given who is ready, also, to give up much. She found out that however great her natural gift might be, it would remain a diamond in the rough, unless she regularly applied herself to the task of acquiring technical mastery. After some years' intense but interrupted application she would

have admitted that no work of first-rate talent can be produced without the expenditure of as much courage, perseverance, and self-control as might have made a hero. For, as Schumann truly says: "The laws of morality are also the laws of art."

What a widely different lot was that of Bastien-Lepage. He, the son of French peasant proprietors, came of people who are perhaps the most thrifty and industrious class in existence: people punctual to their daily task as the sun himself in his rising and down-going; clinging to the soil they till with the tenacity of rocks and trees; working much and wanting little, asking no joy of life except rest.

Just as Marie's parents lived apart in painful disunion, those of Bastien were united by the tenderest family affection. The shrewd, caustic, clear-headed old grandfather — a sort of village Nestor — the thoughtful father, the devoted mother, were helpful influences which unobtrusively helped in developing Bastien's faculties. He began to draw as naturally as another child learns to talk; and his father, noticing his aptitude, very wisely set him to copy some object or other every evening from the age of five. Country life, with its primitive simplicity and its regular succession of daily tasks, sank deeply if

unconsciously into the little fellow's mind: it sank as the seed does, without question or self-analysis, to bide its time in silence and shoot up strong and vigorous when the appointed hour had come. Bastien probably never asked himself whether he should be a painter, a poet, a psychologist, or metaphysician. He became one very likely because he could not help painting. And I suppose he never asked himself whether in his pursuit of art he was sacrificing something that might be more precious. But he was not dazzled and enchanted by the sight of Italian cities and Carnival festivities and ball-room flirtations. Toil and hardship were the rule of life around him, and in his love for art he was willing to undergo any amount of it. Instead of rushing in express trains from Berlin to St. Petersburg and from St. Petersburg to Paris, he remained stationary in his low-roofed country home, seeing the same round of occupation going on year after year: the labourer following the plough; the haymakers in the mowing grass with the light beating on their sun-burnt faces, or stretched in the shade of full-leaved trees in the luxury of repose; reapers reaping the orange-coloured corn; summer evening in the village, with the cattle coming home to their stalls, as

their shadows deepen on the bright green meadows. Such were the impressions which graved themselves always afresh on the lad's receptive memory, to turn themselves one day into those pictures of rural life which may truly be called "the harvest of a quiet eye."

Though Bastien-Lepage's lot—who had to make his living by turning post-office clerk while studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts—may appear so much harder than that of Marie Bashkirtseff, it was in reality more favourable to the development of an artist. For, according to Goethe, "Character is formed by contact with the world, while talent develops in seclusion." Marie Bashkirtseff, with her penetrating intelligence, was quite aware of this. She, for whom nothing was ever sufficiently fine, would sometimes quite seriously envy her fellow-students' their poverty, their humble way of life, their cares and hard work shared in common in a Paris garret. A stern necessity seemed to lend dignity to their art work, while hers was so often patted on the back by her fashionable friends as the pastime of a charming young *Mondaine*.

I was particularly fortunate this year in finding in Marie Bashkirtseff's studio a picture by Bastien-

Lepage, L'Annociation au Bergers, which he painted in 1875 to compete for the Prix de Rome. It was interesting to compare these two artists in their likeness in unlikeness. The same uncompromising realism applied in different ways, and the same power of catching expression and pinning it down as you would a butterfly without losing any of the delicate shades. This picture of a "far-off, divine event" is treated by Bastien-Lepage in a surprisingly naturalistic way, and yet without sacrificing that mystical element which sometimes belongs to the simplest aspects of life. Here is none of that conventional treatment of religious subjects against which Marie rebelled in those "old dusky pictures in the Louvre." Here was real atmosphere, there were real shepherds, rough, homely, unsophisticated men, brown as the soil; and yet, in spite of the reality, this picture gave you a sense of unfamiliar awe. Sitting there in the twilight before the fire lit in the open air, they seem to have been more or less overcome by drowsiness. The first, an old man, an expressive, rugged figure, has bowed his head in adoration and is kneeling before the angel whose sudden apparition has taken the shepherds by surprise. Bewildered and amazed the second leans forward with gaping mouth and

outstretched hands as if to assure himself by touch of the reality of what he sees. Hardly able to rouse himself from sleep the third one sits huddled together in the distance. It is as true as can be to simple shepherd life. The apparition itself has nothing supernatural. It might be purely human with only the angel light of tenderness beaming from the face. The grace of the figure is suggestive of the " eternally feminine " as the celestial messenger shows the shepherds the way to Bethlehem visible in the distance by the luminous haze encircling it like a halo.

This picture with its effect of gloaming light is an idyl of shepherd life. It breathes that simplicity of nature which invests the calling of the herdsman, the ploughman, the mower, the reaper, with the poetry of primitive existence. I shall never forget the impression once produced on me by a Highland shepherd and his flock slowly winding along the solitary road of an upland moor. The long white line of the wavering sheep with that sombre figure of the solitary shepherd was thrown into relief by the smouldering purple of the barren hillsides. It was a scene which seemed to carry one back to remote ages. Even so in the mythic East might the flocks and their shepherds

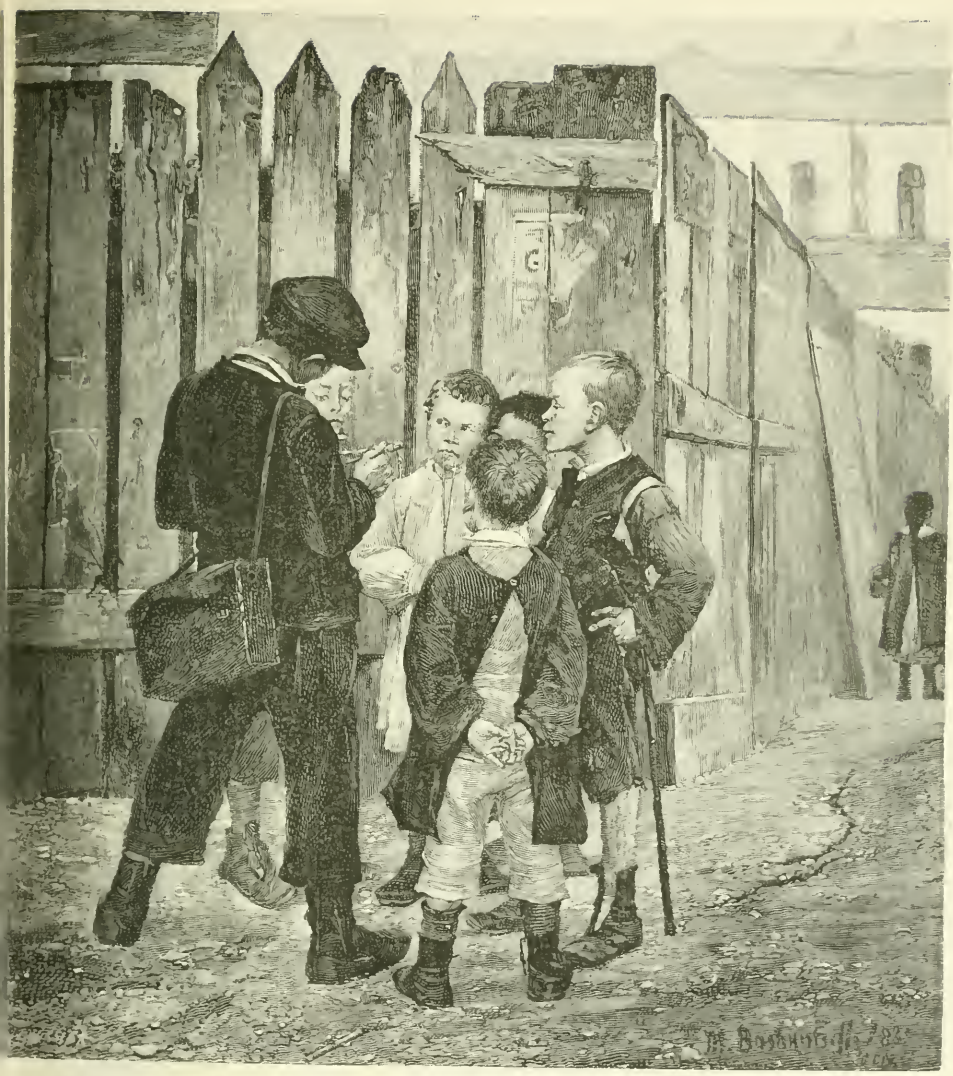
have passed along similar roads in the vast silence of deepening twilight. This same feeling of nearness given to what is dimly remote appeared to me one of the chief attractions of Bastien-Lepage's work.

As Bastien by the country, so is Marie Bashkirtseff inspired by the town. The boulevards and squares of Paris became to her what the hay and harvest-fields had been to Lepage. Her pictures were imbued with the atmosphere of Paris—those delicate, pearly greys which strike one as its keynote of colour. She caught that misty light which you see clinging to masses of architecture as you look from one of the bridges along the blue-grey Seine to the picturesque old Cité with the iron-grey towers of Notre Dame outlined against the clouded azure above. Effects of roofs and clusters of buildings half seen through the confusing haze of early morning; drab-coloured walls enlivened by black and white placards and the flashy tints of rival advertisements; narrow streets with masses of shadow emphasizing the value of light on wall and pavement—these became the dominant note in Marie Bashkirtseff's work as a colourist.

Her subjects, too, are usually taken from the every-day life of the French capital as you may meet it round every street corner. The blouse of the artisan, the

cap of the milliner, the rags of the gamin appeared better adapted to Marie Bashkirtseff for pictorial treatment than the thousand freaks of fashion with which society annually delights to astonish the world. As a painter she preferred the Boulevard de Batignolles or Avenue Wagram to the Champs Élysées and the Bois de Boulogne. The faces of weary people sitting on public benches casually seen in passing or caught sight of across the counter of a shop had hints and suggestions of meaning which she missed in the sleek features of the swells whom she met in the drawing-rooms of her friends.

So it happens that instead of painting the pretty, neat, carefully brushed children marshalled by stately *bonnes* in the Parc Monceaux, she chose in preference the unkempt ragamuffins running wild in the streets. She found more scope there for the exercise of that scrupulous and powerful realism which was the secret of her strength. In the Jean and Jacques, The Girl with the Umbrella, Le Meeting, she has vividly rendered some of the incidents in the town life of children. The faces of these little boys and girls, so pathetic in their premature maturity, in their shrewd or sad or pathetic outlook on the world, are extraordinary in their truth to life. With most of



A Meeting.

(By Marie Bashkirtseff.

the childhood taken out of their childish features, they look at us, if we consider them well, with eyes where experience has already taken the place of innocence—the experience taught them by the teeming streets, those books of the poor, for ever unfolding fresh pages before their inquisitive eyes.

They cannot be called beautiful, these pictures, in the sense that fine forms, nobility of outline, charm of expression are beautiful. But they are interesting, vivid, quick with life. Take that little piteous figure clutching the big, gamp-like umbrella, while she draws her battered shawl more closely around her. With what a look of stolid, inarticulate suffering she seems looking through the rain on the life that is dark and dreary as the prospect before her. You see the hair actually blown back from the forehead, and one mesh has got caught round the handle of the umbrella as she meets the force of the wind with tight-shut lips—a humble subject, but remarkable for the solidity of its handling. Indeed there is a Holbeinesque quality in the vigour of the drawing and the truth of the pose.

Jean et Jacques, the picture of two boys, of seven and four years old, is an equally striking work. They stand so naturally on their legs, these little fellows,

their attitudes are so unstudied, their expressions so admirably true to life. The eldest has already that responsible look which the offspring of the poor acquire so early. With his cap at the back of his head, a shabby umbrella tucked under his right arm, he steps along in his clumsy boots with the resolute air of a little man; the handkerchief tied cravat-wise, but all on one side, the leaf stuck between the lips as a make-believe cigar, show Marie Bashkirtseff's close observation of the ways of his kind. With one hand he grips the unwilling Jacques, dawdling obstinately on his way to school, while with the other in his pocket he pensively fingers the seductive marbles that invite him to play.

Le Meeting, her most important work, is a fine, powerfully painted, vividly realized picture. Just a group of Paris gamins met in council at a street corner, discussing the use to which a piece of string is to be applied, with the excitement of stockbrokers buying and selling shares on the steps of the Bourse. It is a triumph of realism. The faces speak, the limbs are informed with life; it seems as if any moment their legs and arms might begin to move quite naturally. There is nothing conventional about these figures, so fresh in their unstudied attitudes and gestures. These faces, bathed in the pale air of a

Paris back street, breathe quite as much of town life as the discoloured walls and palings in the background. How pert, how Parisian, how wide-awake they are, with their thin, sharp-edged features and their gimlet eyes which allow nothing to escape them. The biggest of the six, with his back to the spectator, is eloquently holding forth to his intently listening comrades, even as he may one day hold forth to quite a different kind of audience, when, after due graduation in the philosophy of rags, he shall begin to practise the lessons which the stony streets have taught him. Quite a different lesson from that which Bastien-Lepage's shepherds have learnt on the hillsides of the wooded Meuse. The execution of this picture, hung in a place of honour at the Luxembourg, is extremely good. There is a genuine feeling for colour in the grey and sombre tones in harmony with the nature of the subject. The open-air effect is happily caught, and the faces stand out in brilliant light. The powerful realism, scrupulous technique, and excellence of the painting, make a great success of Le Meeting, and it is a performance which at once secured a wide recognition for Marie Bashkirtseff, not only in artistic circles, but from the general public.

Marie loved to recall Balzac's questionable defini-

tion that the genius of observation is almost the whole of human genius. It was natural it should please her, since it was the most conspicuous of her many gifts. As we might expect, therefore, she was especially successful as a portrait painter, for she has a knack of catching her sitter's likeness with the bloom of nature yet fresh upon it. She seems to me equally good in her men and women and children, the contrast of many of her heads showing the range and variety of her power. Her portraits are noticeable for that absence of family likeness which is often seen even in the works of great painters, as if the artist had some ideal head before his mind's eye to which he was unconsciously trying to assimilate the faces of his models.

Marie Bashkirtseff's impressionable nature was a safeguard in that respect. All her likenesses are singularly individual, and we realize their character at a glance. Look, for example, at her portrait of a Parisian swell, in irreproachable evening dress and white kid gloves, sucking his silver-headed cane, with a simper that shows all his white teeth, and then at the head and bust of the Spanish convict, painted from life at the prison in Granada. Compare that embodiment of fashionable vacuity with this face,

whose brute-like eyes haunt you with their sadly stunted look. What observation is shown in the painting of those heavily-bulging lips, which express weakness rather than wickedness of disposition—in those coarse hands engaged in the feminine occupation of knitting a blue and white stocking. Again, take those three heads expressive of different kinds of laughter. And nothing is perhaps more difficult than to paint laughing or singing faces: the open mouth being apt to give a foolish, strained, and unnatural look to the face. But Marie Bashkirtseff evinces great skill in painting a natural effect of laughter. The little smiling boneless baby face is a delightfully realistic study of an infant, and equally good is that of the pert little girl whose mouth bubbles over with a child's artless laugh. Much more knowing is the wicked laughter of the young woman with the stylish hat and bunch of violets fastened coquettishly in her sealskin cape. She surely must be laughing at somebody—at some lovelorn swain, whose antics make all her features twitch with amusement.

One of Marie Bashkirtseff's first portraits, and an admirably painted one, is that of her cousin Dina. It was her first work exhibited at the Salon, and shows a young woman with her elbow

resting on a table and her face in her hand. Her loose gown of light blue damask, white muslin fichu and soft, pale golden hair harmonize very happily with the green plush of the table-cover, the white of the book, and the flowers beside the bare arm. The delicate flesh tints of a buxom blonde are admirable in tone, and the face extremely characteristic. It has the unmistakable Tartar type in the low brow, slightly oblique eyes, flattened nose, and broad lips with their expression of sensuous indolence. Here there is nothing of that vivacious charm which is so marked an element in the portrait of Mdlle. de Canrobert. This sketchy portrait looks as if the painting had been done at the first stroke. The round hat, the well-fitting clothes, the plants in the background seem dashed in with the facility of a master. The face sparkles at us from the canvas as if about to utter a witticism. This cleverly-painted figure is all life, all movement, and in its style of treatment and freedom of pose is suggestive of Mr. Whistler's manner.

Her portrait of herself, palette in hand, painted in the last year of her life, is extremely interesting. It is a three-quarters length, and she is standing looking straight in front of her with a harp a little

behind to the left. She is done in that becoming black studio uniform with the broad white frills and jabot which has been so often described, and the gown fits as if moulded on the body. Her deep blonde hair, thickly coiled on the top of the head, ends in a fringe over her forehead. Her features are more refined and spiritual than we know them from the photographs. It seems as if the invisible presence of death had already laid a finger on her fair body and fined it down to a greater delicacy and had given that expression of questioning pathos to the profound wide-open eyes.

It is not possible here to enumerate all her portraits, admirable as many of them are. Her likenesses of Mdlle. Armandine, of a Parisienne, of Prince Bojidar Karegeorgevitch, of Georgeth, and of Mdme. Paul Bashkirtseff, have the same convincing air of intense realism which she adored in Bastien-Lepage's works of that kind. The enthusiastic words, full of light and colour, in which she describes his portraits, might in many an instance be applied to her own without exaggeration.

Not to be overlooked are some of her landscapes and townscapes, if one might be allowed to coin such a word. There is an extremely good little picture

of a portion of a street near the Rue Ampère. A plot of fenced-in building ground gives it a dismally, unfinished look. The houses and walls behind, seen through a pale morning mist, are bathed in an atmosphere, whose grey tones are delicately touched with pink. Two heavy cart-horses are standing at rest in the bit of waste ground, in the centre of which a flame of fire shoots up from a rubbish heap—a spot of brilliant colour amid the general dimness. This is just a finely felt, finely rendered impression. As characteristic and full of atmosphere is the study of a landscape in autumn—a long, straight avenue, with the look of trees about to lose their foliage. Wan clouds, waning light, withering leaves blending their tones in a harmony of grey in grey. The mournfulness of the misty avenue is like a feeling in the air. A mood of nature has been caught which corresponds to a mood of the human mind. The sense of desolation, decay, and impending death seems to breathe from the canvas, as from some actual presence, which though unseen, is none the less there. I cannot help thinking that the artist's own state must, by some subtle process, have literally passed into her canvas. How intensely Marie Bashkirtseff had identified herself with this picture is shown by

Julian's remark on meeting her just after she had painted it. Without knowing the subject she had been at work upon, he exclaimed, "What have you been doing with yourself? Your eyes look full of the mists of autumn."

I have only picked out the most important of her works here, but there are many more—bold designs, original little sketches, studies of all kinds, with always a characteristic touch of expression.

There is that dare-devil sketch of a nude model sitting astride on a chair looking at the skeleton, between the lips of which she has stuck a pipe while waiting for the artist. The sardonic humour conveyed by the contrast of this fair young woman in her fresh exuberance of form facing the skeleton with a challenging attitude is an unparalleled piece of audacity for a young girl to have painted. It is especially good, too, as an arrangement of colour, and shows perhaps more originality of invention than anything else this artist did. The Fisher with Rod and Line is an interesting study of a brown Nicois with the deep blue sea-water below. And last, not least, there is the unfinished sketch for the picture of The Street by which she was so completely engrossed only a few weeks before her death. The

background of houses, the bench with the people sitting back to back in various attitudes expressive of weariness, destitution, or despair—one with his head hidden by his arm leaning on the back of the seat, another with crossed legs staring straight before him with the look of one for whom there is no more private resting-place than this—all these half-finished figures, even when only consisting of a few scratches, are as true to every-day life as can be. But when all the preliminary studies for this characteristic picture were done, when the canvas had been placed and all was ready, the artist found but one thing missing, and that, alas, was herself!

Though all the work accomplished by Marie Bashkirtseff is strictly modern and realistic, the dream of her last years was to paint a great religious picture. The subject was to be the two Maries mourning beside the tomb of Christ. She imagined these women not as they had hitherto been represented by the old masters, but as forlorn outcasts, wayworn and weary, the "Louise Michels" of their time, shunned of all pharisaic, respectable folk. They were to embody the utmost depth of love and grief. Her descriptions of this picture that was to be, as given in her journal, are highly suggestive and

poetical. The figures of these women—one standing, the other in a sitting posture—would have shown in their pose and attitude different phases of sorrow. The woman on the ground abandoning herself to the violence of unrestrained mourning; the other as rigid as a statue, as if in confirmation of Mrs. Browning's line, "I tell you hopeless grief is passionless." Only a few inadequate sketches, however, are left of this pictorial vision in which the crescent moon was described as floating in an ensanguined sunset sky above a waste dark with the coming night.

This word-picture never took shape in line and colour. But it haunts you with a suggestion of lofty possibilities to be reached by Marie Bashkirtseff as an artist had she only lived to carry out her conceptions. And as the poet declares "songs unheard" to be sweeter than any that we may ever hear, so it is with this unpainted picture as compared to the painted ones; for, remarkable as her work is, it is to a great extent remarkable as having been done by so young a girl after only a few years of study. It is as a promise even more than a performance that it claims our admiration.

As we already know, Marie Bashkirtseff belongs to the modern French school of naturalists, more

particularly to that branch of it of which Bastien-Lepage was the most representative man. But her work is not exclusively French. There is in it also a pronounced Russian element. There is a marked race-likeness between her work and that of other eminent Russian painters and novelists. Matthew Arnold's definition of the Russian nature in his article on Count Leo Tolstoï might with very little alteration be applied to Marie Bashkirtseff herself. "Russian nature," he says, "as it shows itself in the Russian novel, seems marked by an extreme sensitiveness, a consciousness most quick and acute, both for what the man's self is experiencing and also for what others in contact with him are thinking and feeling. He finds relief to his sensitiveness in letting his perceptions have perfectly free play, and in recording their reports with perfect fidelity. The sincereness with which the reports are given has even something childlike and touching. . . ."

This was ever Marie Bashkirtseff's paramount aim, both as a painter and writer, to make a perfectly faithful report of nature, of human nature and what is external to it—to give a living picture of gesture and manner as well as of thought and feeling—in short, to produce human documents. Her mind and

temperament, happily for her, were in touch with the times. For the specially Russian alertness to impressions and its genius for recording them has also become the mark of the latest phase of European art. And Marie Bashkirtseff took to it as if to the manner born (as indeed she was), rather than in imitation of the modern French style, or of Bastien-Lepage in particular.

In realizing this dominant quality, one wonders how it had fared with this impressionable artist if, instead of being surrounded by Parisian influences, she had lived in her native land, the South of Russia. Supposing she, with her intense receptivity, had imbibed those primitive aspects of life still to be found amid the remoteness of the Steppe? Faithful to what lay around her, Marie has painted dreary houses blurred by mist, waifs and strays of the Paris boulevards, unlovely children in unlovely rags. The critic who blames her preference for what is ugly and sordid does not do so without cause. But when he asks why she does not paint the elegances by which she is surrounded, she replies on her part, "Where, then, shall I find any movement, any of that savage and primitive liberty, any true expression?"

That natural movement and primitive liberty she

could certainly not expect in Paris high-life. But in the Ukraine she might have found it without admixture of ugliness; she might have been inspired by its coquettish villages gleaming white amid orchards; by the robust and handsome peasantry still clad in their picturesque national garb. What splendid models a realist like herself would have had to paint from in those well-shaped peasant girls, whose movements had never been hampered by anything more artificial in the way of clothes than an embroidered chemise and a petticoat reaching no further than the ankles. Here she would still have met something of the "savage and primitive liberty" which her soul longed for preserved in many an old Cossack custom and village rite. Still more so in the aspects of primitive nature—in the boundless expanse of the Steppe, "that green and golden ocean" as Gogol calls it, "variegated by an infinite variety of iridescent tints." What a virgin soil for an artist in love with nature! What new types! What splendid opportunities for the expression of beauty in form and colour! Perhaps it is idle to speculate on such possibilities, but it seems as if Marie Bashkirtseff might have produced work of a much higher order had her astonishing gift for recording impressions

found impressions more pictorially attractive to record; had she lived in an atmosphere bathed in an ampler light, amid a population still partial to the display of brilliant colours in their dress. However that might have been will never be known now.

There is a passage in her Journal where, speaking of the sacrifices which art exacts, she says she has given up more for it than Benvenuto Cellini when he burn his costly furniture; indeed, it was her life itself which she gave. To quote her own striking words: "Work is a fatiguing process, dreaded yet loved by fine and powerful natures, who frequently succumb to it. For if the artist does not fling himself into his work as unhesitatingly as Curtius did into the chasm at his feet, or as the soldier leaps into the breach, and if when there he does not toil with the energy of the miner beneath the earth, if, in short, he stays to consider difficulties instead of overcoming them like those lovers of fairyland who triumph over ever fresh difficulties to win their princesses, his work will remain unfinished and die still-born in the studio. The general public may not understand, but those who are of us will find in these lines a stimulating lesson, a comfort, and an encouragement."

Marie Bashkirtseff's work, unfortunately for us,

was left unfinished, but it has not died still-born in the studio. It is astonishingly alive. More alive to-day than on the day it was painted, and resembles that plant of basil which throve so luxuriantly, rooted in a dead man's brain. For the energies of her glowing vitality are now alive in her pictures.

I subjoin here a complete list of Marie Bashkirtseff's works :—

1. Portrait de Mdlle. Bashkirtseff.
2. Portrait de Mdlle. Dinah.
3. Portrait de Mme. P. B.
4. Jeune femme lisant.
5. Le Meeting.
6. Fleurs.—*Salon*, 1884.
7. Fleurs.
8. Les trois Rires.
9. Tête (Étude).
10. Profil.
11. Nature morte.
12. Intérieur d'une chaumière à Nice.
13. Portrait du Général Pélikan.
14. Georgette.
15. Portrait de Mdlle. Bashkirtseff.
16. Esquisse.
17. Tête d'enfant.
18. Coco.
19. Étude des mains.
20. Esquisse.
21. Marine.
22. Monsieur et Madame (Étude).
23. L'Atelier, Julian.
24. Tête (Étude).
25. Tête d'enfant.
26. Le Soir.
27. Ophélie (Étude).
28. Paysan de Poltava (Étude).
29. Tête (Étude).
30. Grand-Père malade.
31. Copie.
32. Étude.
33. La Rue.
34. Avril.
35. Portrait du Prince Bojidar Karageorgevitch.
36. Le Parapluie.
37. Jean et Jacques.
38. Étude d'enfant.
39. Paysage d'Automne.
40. Portrait de Mdlle. Dinah.
41. Étude de femme.
42. Portrait de Jacques Rendouin.
43. Jeune Garçon (Étude).
44. Tête de femme.
45. Étude.
46. Coin de Rue.
47. Portrait de Mdlle. de Canrobert.
48. Une Vague.



MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF.
(After a Photograph.)

49. Étude de mains,
50. Paysage à Sèvres.
51. Paysage à Sèvres.
52. Paysage.
53. Portrait de son frère.
54. Portrait de femme.
55. Étude de Main.
56. Vielle femme (Étude).
57. Tête (Étude).
58. Esquisse.
59. Mendiant (Étude).
60. Projet du tableau: "Les Saintes Femmes."
61. Les Saintes Femmes (Esquisse)
62. Mendiant de Grenade.
63. Une Dame.
64. Parisienne.—*Salon*, 1883.
65. Tête de Forçat.
66. Irma (Étude).
67. Paysage de Nice.
68. Copie d'après Velasquez
69. Chiffonière.
70. La Rue Brémontier.
71. Étude de mains.
72. Gommeux.
73. La Bohémienne.
74. Intérieur d'une bontique au Mont Dore.
75. Portrait de Mdlle. C.
76. Intérieur de bric-à-brac à Madrid.
77. Écluse à Asnières.
78. Étude d'enfant.
79. Étude (Modèle).
80. Modèle.
81. Pêcheur à Nice.
82. Esquisse.
83. Au bord de la mer.
84. A la fenêtre.
85. Thérèse.
86. Wanka.
87. Paysage à Nice.
88. Étude.
89. Étude.
90. Marine.
91. Bébé.
92. Marine.
93. Étude pour le tableau: "Les Saintes Femmes."
94. Convalescente.
95. Mendiant Italien.
96. Portrait.
97. Étude.
98. Portrait de Mme. Gredelne.
99. Portrait de Mme. Nachet.
100. Japonaise.

PASTELS.

101. Portrait de Louis de Canrobert.
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